

Our  
Misunderstood  
Bible

H. Clay Trumbull



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OUR  
MISUNDERSTOOD  
BIBLE

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# OUR MISUNDERSTOOD BIBLE

COMMON ERRORS  
ABOUT BIBLE TEXTS AND TRUTHS

BY  
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"How to Deal with Doubts and Doubters;"  
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## PREFACE

No book is, in its more important truths, easier to understand than the Bible. Yet, at the same time, no book has suffered more than the Bible from being misunderstood at important points, as well as in other particulars. Some of these misunderstandings are easily accounted for, and might be easily removed; others are not easily accounted for, yet have prevailed, without being accounted for, from generation to generation.

There are many difficulties growing out of the radical differences between Oriental and Occidental methods of thought and speech, and customs and practises. Even such terms as "love" and "hate" can hardly be comprehended by a Westerner, as an Easterner would employ them, and on such a difference as this two schools of theology might array themselves in determined and persistent opposition. Again, the Oriental method of poetic imagery in ordinary speech is well nigh incomprehensible to the Occidental, accustomed as he is to cling to the letter of the text that killeth, as over against the spirit of a figure or an illustration that would give life.

There are many ideas about the Bible that generally prevail, without their having any basis

in the Bible itself. These erroneous ideas have even a stronger hold on Bible readers generally than the Bible text; and in pulpit and in pew they are taken for granted as if they had some truth in them. Thus it is often said, without any sufficient thought on the subject, that "Law prevails in the Old Testament," and that "Love prevails in the New Testament;" and again that "the Holy Spirit strives directly with the sinner to bring him to repentance." Again, there have been wrong uses of a word, through mistranslation, or through a misunderstanding of the technical or the popular meaning of that word in former times, which tend to mislead the reader. Such is the term "be converted," instead of the simple term "turn." The Revisers have not been able to change all the ideas that had grown out of the error of their predecessors, by showing as they have that "be converted" is not a Bible term in the sense that it was long supposed to be. Again the term "cross-bearing" or "bearing the cross" cannot be made to conform to the truth without considering the meaning it had in New Testament times. What it is now generally supposed to mean is very far from its Bible meaning.

"Perfection" and "sanctification" and "sacrifice," and other Bible words, have one meaning

as they appear in the Bible, and a very different meaning as they are commonly understood in religious conversation or controversy. They often have a very good meaning even as popularly understood—or misunderstood. But the Bible meaning is really the best one, even though another meaning may be commonly preferred.

Single Bible words, like “Mizpah,” or “Angel,” or “Cherubim,” or “Amen,” are by many readers so misunderstood that they are a means of misleading than of rightly guiding those who would know and be helped by the truth.

Having found the gain to himself, and to some others, in the added light on Bible terms and truths by these explanations and corrections, the writer presents the statements and suggestions herewith, hoping that they may help still others. Yet none of the views here expressed are to be accepted by a Bible reader unless he find them to be conformable to Bible teachings on his more careful study. But in any event good can hardly fail to come of readers being stimulated to a closer examination of the grounds for believing or of questioning as to the ideas they have been accustomed to connect with certain Bible words and terms and truths.

Certain preliminary statements as to Bible teachings in general are given as precedent to a

treatment of specific texts and truths. The value of these also will be found in their possible suggestiveness rather than in any dogmatic value.

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Philadelphia.



## CONTENTS

I		
Bible Words Not Always a Safe Guide	— . .	9
II		
Harming Souls by Quoting Scripture	— . .	17
III		
Understandest Thou What Thou Readest	. . .	23
IV		
Principles Rather Than Rules in the Bible	. . .	30
V		
Questions of Authorship Not Always Important	. . .	40
VI		
Love in the Old Testament, Law in the New	. . .	47
VII		
In His Name, Not for His Sake	. . . .	65
VIII		
The Holy Spirit's Mission To and Through Believers	. . .	71
IX		
Conversion Man's Responsibility Not God's	. . .	81
X		
Needless Worry as to being "Born Again"	. . .	90
XI		
Is There Any Real Gain in Salvation	. . .	94

XII	
Not a Duty To work Out One's Salvation . . .	103
XIII	
Sanctification, Not "Sanctification" . . .	108
XIV	
Purity of Heart Not a State of Sinlessness . . .	119
XV	
Bible Perfection Not Sinlessness . . .	125
XVI	
Denying Self, Not Denying Things to Self . . .	130
XVII	
Bearing the Cross, Not Bearing Crosses . . .	137
XVIII	
Sacrifice as a Means of Personal Enjoyment . . .	145
XIX	
Love Not a Matter of Feeling . . .	155
XX	
Whom Does God Love? . . .	164
XXI	
Are Children Born Condemned or Redeemed . . .	169
XXII	
Bible Rest Not Inaction . . .	210
XXIII	
Busy Martha's Never Good Housekeepers . . .	217

Contents vii

XXIV

Clergymen Not the Chief Preachers . . . . 226

XXV

Chastisement Not Punishment . . . . 235

XXVI

Mizpah: A Barrier Not a Bond . . . . 241

XXVII

The Inferiority of Angels . . . . 245

XXVIII

Cherubim Utterly Unlike Angels . . . . 252

XXIX

Spirit, Not Soul, Man's Pre-eminence . . . . 260

XXX

What Will Satisfy Us When We Awake? . . . . 268

XXXI

The Resurrection Not a Mere Rising Again . . . . 271

XXXII

"Amen, and Amen" . . . . 280

XXXIII

Can Man Define Infinite Truth . . . . 293



# I

## BIBLE WORDS NOT ALWAYS A SAFE GUIDE

If one were seriously to ask the question, "Are Bible words always a safe guide to a reader?" many a Bible lover would reply promptly, and with positiveness, "Of course they are, and I am surprised to hear you ask such a question." Other Bible lovers, quite as intelligent and quite as reverent as those with whom they differ, might say, "It depends on whose words in the Bible you are speaking of as 'Bible words,' and how you understand those words. God's words are recorded in the Bible; so are the words of God's servants and messengers and prophets. Some of Satan's words are recorded in the Bible; so are the words of Pharaoh and Jezebel, and others of God's enemies. It will not do to say sweepingly that all of the Bible words are a safe guide to all." Such a question about the Bible, and the whole subject it suggests, are worth careful consideration, in order that we may realize our duty and our privileges.

Even when we are sure that we have the

words of a chosen man of God, we may not be sure that we read, or use aright, or correctly understand, those words. We owe it to God, and we owe it to ourselves, to *know* as to this. Here is an illustration, for example, of Bible words misused in order to mislead.

A mischievous young lad, of godly parents, was in the habit of being away from home much of the night, often not going to bed until daylight, or near it. His excellent grandmother, whose husband was a clergyman, expostulated with him, saying that night was the time for sleep, and days were for activity.

"Why, grandmother," said the mischievous youngster, "the Bible teaches us quite the opposite of that statement."

"What makes you say that?" asked the surprised and shocked grandmother.

At this the lad brought his grandmother the words of Paul to verify his assertion, and he added full notes (notes of *his* writing, not Paul's). His "text" was from 1 Thessalonians 5: 6-8: "Let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober." The young scapegrace said that in these teachings drunkenness and

night-sleeping were classed together as mis-doing, while Christians were enjoined to watch in the night, and to be sober. He said that our world began in the better way. In Eden and in the beginning of earthly time "the evening and the morning"—not the morning and the evening, but the evening and the morning—"were the first day," and so on day after day. The sun guarded men in the daytime while they slept, and they could guard themselves nights, when they were about their business, as they ought to be. But in these later and more corrupt days many now slept nights, or were drunken nights.

That good grandmother was not convinced by her grandson's use, or misuse, of Bible words; neither was she encouraged as to the helpful Bible study of that graceless youth. But he represented, in his misuse of the Bible, a multitude of those who fail to get what the Bible could teach them, and others through them, even while they are becoming acquainted with Bible words.

Indeed, any one familiar with the world's best books, whether those books be counted sacred or common, knows, or ought to know, that there is no other book in all the world so often and so shockingly misquoted as is the Bible. That statement is rather hard on the Bible—is

it not? Yet that it is a correct statement will be testified to by many who believe that the Bible is true, even while they often quote what is not true, thinking it is in the Bible.

There are places in the Bible teachings, or in the Bible texts and words, where a truth is stated in two seemingly contradictory ways, when both are correct, yet where the truth as to this is not shown on the surface. One has to think and to study before he can explain or understand Bible words. And it is well that this is so, although the reader may not perceive this at first.

For instance, one says that the Bible command is:

“Answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest he be wise in his own conceit” (Prov. 26: 5).

And the one who would follow this counsel always tries to talk with fools in this way. “No,” says another, “the Bible command is,

“Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
Lest thou also be like unto him” (Prov. 26: 4).

And he who would follow this instruction does not waste his time matching words with fools. As to the words in the Bible, both readers are correct, but neither Bible text is a positive command. It is the reader's duty to find when the proverb, rather than a command, is in order, and this calls for study and a measure of wisdom.



So in many another case, with Bible words in the Old Testament and in the New.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6: 2).

“Each man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. 6: 5).

No book in the world is so safe a guide for any and for all as the Bible; yet it is not enough to know the mere words of the Bible, if we would profit by this Book of books. It demands study, and a sincere, prayerful desire to learn its meaning.

Blunders are often made through supposing that all the words of the Bible are to be taken literally, just as they stand, instead of being taken for what they evidently mean, in the light of their surroundings, and of the obvious purpose of their writer, and of the known spirit and teachings of Him who gave the Bible for the guidance of his children.

If a man says that it is wrong to go into a grog-shop, or a saloon, or a bar-room, in order to rescue or warn one whom he loves, or to reform others who are there, and whom he would lead into better paths, he would certainly not be justified in this view by quoting the Bible words when they say:

“Be not among winebibbers” (Prov. 23: 20).

Yet these words as they stand might seem to be a more sweeping condemnation than was often

made of poor Mrs. Nation and other "reformers" who spend so much time in disobeying the Bible,—if the Bible words are to be taken literally.

Most of us have heard, from childhood, the statement or declaration, as if from the Bible, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." As commonly understood, this "text" is supposed to mean, or to teach, that a loving father or mother must now and then thrash or flog a boy or girl with a "rod" or a switch or a shingle or a strap. How many little creatures have suffered from the application of that "text," or of the "rod" spoken of in that text! And how many misguided parents have tried to comfort themselves, when causing their children to suffer, with this idea, perhaps supposing that they obeyed God in this thing even if they never tried to obey God in anything else!

Yet there is no such injunction, or proverb, in the Bible as "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Perhaps the proverb that is as likely as any other to have been perverted into an encouragement to misguided parents to show their bad temper in this way is this:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son;  
But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."  
(Prov. 13: 24.)

But this does not justify flogging a boy or a girl merely in order to show that that child is not hated. One meaning for the Bible word translated "rod" is "scepter;" it stands for "authority," "rule," "government," "control." A parent is set of God to represent God in love toward his children. In this spirit a parent is to "chasten." To "chasten" is to train or to "bring up," not necessarily to flog or thrash.

Other Bible texts have been as badly abused and misused as that text. Let us be sure, then, first, that a quoted "text" is in the Bible, and then that it means what it says, instead of something very different, before we suppose that the Bible teaches what we infer from the familiar words.

In saying or thinking that Bible teachings, or Bible statements, are contradictory, let us not be surprised that this can be so. Many of the lessons of experience in our ordinary life course seem, or are, contradictory. Our greatest help often comes from our hindrances. Perhaps an obstacle in our way hinders our rapid descent down a steep hill, and thus helps us to safety and a fresh foothold. That which is our real grief to-day may be the cause of great gladness by and by. Our being brought lower in thought and spirit in the present may enable us to rise higher

in the future. Even a mere athlete stoops low as preparatory to his jumping high or to his leaping long. Indeed, there is hardly anything in a man's earthly experience that does not incidentally call for, or cause, the opposite.

Why, then, should we wonder that the best gold of Bible truths does not lie in open sight on the very surface? We have to dig as for hid treasure if we would get that which we should and shall value most. We have reason therefore to thank God that his Word must be studied, and its meaning found out and pondered, by those who would have its full benefits.

## II

### HARMING SOULS BY QUOTING SCRIPTURE

Not only Bible words, but many other good things in use in daily life are liable to be misused, and so to harm instead of help. That which has power for good, if well used, is likely to have a corresponding power for evil if used unwisely. Its value depends on the skill and care displayed in its handling. A sharp carving knife, which in the hand of the head of the household may be a means of providing food for those who sit around the family table, may, in the hand of a little child or of a careless user, be a means of harm or of death to the one who has it in hand, or to those who are near him. As with material instruments, so with spiritual—their helpfulness or harm pivots on their right using as surely as on their intrinsic worth.

Thus, "the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." Yet the very writer who assures us of this great truth, speak-

ing for those who indite inspired Scripture, and of those who receive the message, says, as to the truth concerning Jesus Christ: "We have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing. For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." Hearers who are of an age or who are in a position where they "ought to be teachers" often fail to perceive the difference between truths which are as milk for babes and those which are as solid food for full-grown men, and in consequence harm others by not "handling aright the word of truth" and giving proper portions for their nourishment and upbuilding.

Even the wisest religious teachers may be a means of harming souls who are not sufficiently considered in the manner and matter of the truth presented to them. Peter and Paul were certainly above the average as religious teachers, specially inspired for their exalted mission; but Peter says as to the epistles of Paul concerning Christ and his salvation: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles,

speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

What we call "Holy Scripture" or "Holy Bible" contains, as covering the pages and contents of our English Bible, words of truth and words of falsehood. This is not a matter of outside opinion; it is so declared in the Holy Bible itself, and it is to be recognized as the declaration of holy men who gave us this inestimable record. It is distinctly said in that record that certain words came from God, and that certain other words came from Satan, as illustrated in succeeding pages; that certain words were spoken by men whom God approved and who spoke for God, and that certain other words were spoken by enemies of God, whose falsehoods and whose falsity God by his representatives pointed out. Who will dare to say, for one minute, that the words of God and the words of Satan are of equal worth, that there is to be no distinction between the declarations of evil men contrary to the principles of God's law, and the declarations of men who spoke for God on the basis of eternal principles disclosed by him?

Paul, writing to Timothy as to the Old Testament Scriptures, which he had learned from his

childhood, says, "Every scripture inspired of God," or, as many read it, "is inspired of God, is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." That declaration of Paul's *is true*, as he meant it, and as he meant it to be understood; but as it is often understood, or misunderstood, and is quoted, or misquoted, it is *not true*. If it be understood and quoted, as it often is, as meaning that every written word, including all the words of a certain version of the Sacred Scriptures, are equally true, even those words that God shows to be false, then that utterance of Paul is misunderstood, misquoted and misapplied, and souls are harmed or imperiled by the act. And so of many another portion of Scripture.

This is not merely a possible danger as to the use of Scripture, it is a very common and a very practical matter. The error of using Scripture words to the injury of precious souls by misunderstanding and therefore by misusing them, is widespread among teachers of well-nigh every grade. It is to be noted in the Sunday-school teacher's chair, in the superintendent's desk, at the editor's table, in the clergyman's pulpit, in the evangelist's tent, in the place of the theological professor or the ecclesiastical delegate. It does not even seem to be generally guarded against by



those who value most highly Bible words as their weapon of attack and defense.

Many a man quotes from the book of Job as if its words were all true, because it is part of the Bible, without considering whether it is Job, or Eliphaz, or Bildad, or Zophar, or Elihu, or Satan, or God himself, who is the speaker. Similarly as to the book of Ecclesiastes; often no difference seems to be noted between its passages of truth and those of avowed error. Words of the idolatrous Philistines are quoted as if they were the words of a prophet of Israel. So as to such texts as "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" "Jehovah watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another;" "We all do fade as a leaf;" "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using)." "If meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble." Such texts and others have been so often misused that many now do not have any idea of what is their true meaning. Every week, sermons are preached from texts misunderstood or misused by the preacher; and similarly in other spheres. Can Scripture be thus perverted without harm to hearers?

In quoting a Bible text, the first thing to be considered is whether it is declared in the Bible

as true or as false ; and the next thing is to learn—not what it *says*, but—what it *means*. This often requires close study. When these two points are clear to the user's mind, it is time to consider, as then of chief importance, whether it is intended and fitted of God for application to those to whom the user has a message at this particular time. How seldom all this is duly considered in advance ! And how much harm is done, or risked, in consequence !

### III

#### “UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST?”

It is one thing to read the Bible; it is another thing to understand the Bible. Even though one has a reverent spirit, and a sincere desire to know the truth, as he reads in the Book of books, it does not follow that he will have an understanding of that which he reads. Knowledge is necessary in order to the gaining of knowledge. Study is essential to the acquirement of the results of study. Guidance from others is important, if we would be gainers from our own efforts in research. It is not enough to go to the Bible for instruction in that of which it treats. We must have knowledge outside of that which the Bible supplies, and help from outside of ourselves as earnest seekers after truth, if we would understand what we read and profit by our reading.

A man high in authority in the court of Ethiopia, and presumably of more than ordinary intelligence, had journeyed from his country to Jerusalem in order to worship Jehovah, the God

of gods and the Lord of lords, at the one proper house of worship. He was a student of the Old Testament Scriptures. He had some knowledge of the truth, and he wanted to have more. After enjoying the advantages of a visit to the Holy City, he was returning homeward. As he journeyed he read in the book of Isaiah. Philip the evangelist, a special messenger of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, joined the Ethiopian as he rode in his chariot, and his first question to him was:

“Understandest thou what thou readest?”  
(Acts 8: 30.)

The intelligent and modest response of the Ethiopian courtier was:

“How can I, except some one shall guide me?”

And he there sought and received the help of Philip in his Bible reading.

When two of the disciples of Jesus, better trained than the Ethiopian chamberlain, were wondering that their Master had submitted himself to death, that Master joined them, as they walked in anxious thought, and, after reproaching them for their dulness in the comprehension of Bible truth, he became anew their teacher, “and beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scrip-

tures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24: 27.) Then for the first time they understood what they had often read in the Bible without understanding.

In the days of Jesus it was, as it is now, important, not merely to know the words of the Bible, but to understand what was meant by those words as used by Bible writers, and as intended to be understood by Bible readers. Such understanding calls for knowledge and study, as well as spiritual guidance.

Bible words do not always mean just what they say, although Bible words always mean just what they mean. In reading Bible words it is, therefore, important for us to know just what those words mean, as well as just what those words say. When Jesus says, “The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life,” (John 6: 63) we know that he means just what he means, while he does not mean just what he says. His “words” are not themselves “spirit” or “life,” although they be made the means of both spirit and life. So, again, when Jesus says concerning his betrayer, “Good were it for that man if he had not been born” (Mark 14: 21), we have no doubt as to what he means, but we do not claim that the utterance as it stands is literally true. Of course it could not really be good

for a man, unless there was a man for it to be good for.

Not all that is in the Bible is written because it is the truth. There are lies recorded there as lies, intended to be understood as lies; yet many a time one of these lies is quoted as if it were the truth. A gentleman once said to the writer, in support of the idea that nothing is so precious to a man as his life:

“All that a man hath will he give for his life.”  
(Job 2: 4.)

“Where did you get that idea?” said the writer.

“From the Bible,” was the answer.

“Who said it?”

“Really I don’t remember.”

“Well, it was Satan who said it. It was a lie then, and it is a lie now. The Lord proved it was a lie; and here you are quoting that old lie of Satan as if it were the truth, just because the words as you quote them are in the Bible.”

Yet that gentleman was not an ignoramus. He was one of the original International Lesson Committee, an exceptionally intelligent and careful Bible student. He simply illustrated in his course the liability there is of being deceived, or of being a means of deceiving others, by taking it for granted that all the words of the Bible are

in themselves true, or are to be taken as meaning just what they say, or seem to say.

While the Bible is from God, it was written by men in human language; and men are dependent on their knowledge of human language for their knowledge of the truths which God would teach them through the Bible. Originally written in Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Greek, the Bible had to be translated into the vernacular of modern men in order to be understood by modern men. Every man needs help in the simplest reading of the Bible in his own language. As a child he has to be taught the meaning of Bible words in his vernacular; and in his maturity he needs fresh light on the significance and force of Bible terms that he has but partially apprehended hitherto. A man who called on Mr. Moody in his study was surprised to find some open volumes of commentaries on his table.

“What, Brother Moody, do you use commentaries?” he asked.

“Of course I do,” said Moody.

“Well, I sha’n’t enjoy your preaching so much, now. I thought you preached right from the Bible.”

“Did you ever like my sermons?”

“Indeed I did.”

“Then you liked Moody’s commentaries.”

Mr. Moody was shrewd enough to point out in this way that that hearer was helped to an understanding of what he read in the Bible by Mr. Moody, as every one must be helped by somebody in order to get the most and the best from the Bible.

At the best, human language is imperfect and liable to various interpretations and consequent ambiguity and misunderstandings. Moreover, words are figurative rather than exact and definitive, and it is necessary to get at the truth by the living suggestions in language, instead of taking that language as finally conclusive in its dead literalness. This difficulty in the use of Bible language is increased, or intensified, by the fact that the Bible was primarily written by Easterns for Easterns; and that Easterns, by their very nature, are prone to speak in figures of speech as an appeal to the imagination. Yet all human language is, in a sense, figurative, and this fact must be borne in mind by one who would understand the meaning of words as he reads them.

A scoffer was finding fault with Bible language because of its ambiguity, and claiming that religious truth, like scientific truth, should be stated in exact terms that could never be misunderstood. Terms for color and shape, he said, could not



have two or more meanings, and would be the same in the same language in all the passing centuries. His Christian opponent responded:

“How would that be in a case like this: ‘A blackberry is red when it is green.’ Is there no ambiguity in the use of the terms for color there?”

Wherever human language is employed for the expression of truth, scientific, poetic, or religious, there are possibilities of misunderstanding by intelligent hearers or readers, and these must be recognized and guarded against.

“Understandest thou what thou readest?” is a question that comes home with force to every one who looks to the Bible for instruction and guidance; and the more intelligent the student of the Bible is, the more inclined he is to say, “How can I, except some one shall guide me?”

## IV

### PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN RULES IN THE BIBLE

// A chief value of the Bible as a guide of human conduct is found in the fact that it is a book of vital principles, instead of being a book of rigid rules; that it indicates in its precepts the spirit that should influence us in all our actions, instead of declaring to us in specific injunctions the application of those principles in every imaginable case. // Yet it is just at this point that the Bible is misunderstood by many, and that many are perplexed by what seems to them a lack of explicitness in the divinely inspired teachings of the Bible.

// Men go to the Bible for rules of conduct, when they ought to go there for principles to guide them in framing rules. // They find there a statement which is in the form of a rule, and they accept it as unqualifiedly binding on themselves and others for all time, when a closer study of its meanings would show that it was intended not as an invariable rule, but as an incidental illustration of a principle that is of unvarying application to all persons and all times. (In this way

men are often misled by the letter of the Bible text, and fail to perceive the life-giving spirit of that text.)

In the Old Testament it is written: "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" and again: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In the New Testament these commandments are repeated in the same form; and Jesus says of them: "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." Yet these commandments are of small account as mere rules of conduct, while they are "exceeding broad" as principles to guide all conduct. They do not tell us what to do to show that we love God, or that we love our neighbor. They do give us a principle by which we can shape our actions towards God and towards man. We must, however, first know what love is, and then we must learn by study and thought what is required as an exhibit of love.

He who really wants to know and to do just what is right in any given case, has the responsibility laid upon him of finding out for himself how the principle of these commandments bears upon that case, and then of acting accordingly. But if a man is puzzled to know whether love requires him to take the right hand or the left

when he meets a fellow-man on a narrow crossing in a muddy street, he will find no specific declaration on the subject in the pages of the entire Bible. The principles enunciated in the Bible ought to enable a man to see that it is his duty to conform to the well-defined current practise in such a matter and to concede to his fellow-man that portion of the pathway which custom or law declares to be his fellow-man's. But unless a man is willing to study out from Bible principles a rule that should guide him in the case, he must be so far without a rule that has the Bible sanction. And thus it is in all the range of human duty; the Bible enunciates the principle that ought in every case to be a man's standard of action, while it does not purpose to supply a man with a specific rule for every particular case before him for decision.

Although this is unmistakably the truth concerning the Bible, it is by no means generally recognized as the truth; and because of the misconceptions of the purpose and methods of the Bible so far, men are constantly misleading themselves in courses of conduct through their conviction that the Bible does or does not specifically pass upon those courses of conduct for all time and for every person. They perceive, for example, that a certain course of conduct seems, at the

present time, to tend to the injury of the one who pursues it, and of others who are affected by its influence. This causes them to ask whether or not the course be a sinful one. Going to the Bible with an idea that that is a book of specific rules of conduct, instead of a book of principles from which rules of conduct are to be deduced, they look for some explicit forbidding of the course in question, and, not finding that there, they decide that the conduct itself cannot properly be counted sinful. Their mistake is not as to what is in the Bible, but as to what the Bible is. They suppose the Bible to be a book of rules, when it really is a book of principles illustrated by historic applications of principles to particular cases.

A gentleman once challenged the writer to point to a single Bible text that forbade human slavery, or if he could not do so to admit that human slavery was in conformity with Bible teachings. Thus challenged, the writer replied:

“ I frankly confess that I cannot point to any Bible text which, taken as it stands in the obvious meaning attached to it by its writer, specifically forbids slavery, polygamy, or wine drinking. At the same time, I cannot point to any single Bible text which specifically commands any one of these practises. Therefore, as at present advised, and

in the light of gospel principles as I understand them, and in the exercise of a sound Christian discretion, I shall have but one wife, no negro, and drink cold water.”

There was the argument in a nutshell as to the view of Bible texts as expressive of principles, or of rules. One man looked to the Bible as a mere book of rules; the other looked to it as a thesaurus of principles, from which rules were to be deduced for the guidance of conduct from time to time.

It is true that the New Testament (Col. 3: 22) says explicitly: “Servants [the Greek is bond-servant or slave] obey in all things them that are your masters, according to the flesh,” and that slaves were exhorted to be in subjection to their own masters. But that was simply the enunciation of a principle which is to guide all Christians in their relations to those having authority over them. It is not a rule which enjoins the practise of human slavery at all times. It is true that a proverb in use in Solomon’s day says: “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,” but that is no more binding as an invariable rule for all men everywhere, than the other proverb: “Go to the ant, thou sluggard.” It does not mean it is safe to drink wine with your eyes shut. It does mean that if you want to be

clear of danger from wine, you will do well to let it alone, without even looking towards it in its attractiveness. It is true that office bearers in the church were required to have only one wife; but that does not mean that laymen holding no official position were to have more than one wife. The principle enunciated in that command was that in a polygamous community no man who indulged in polygamy was to be chosen for an office in the Christian church.

An eminent and highly honored bishop of the Church of England said, in an address on the subject of betting and gambling, in the presence of the clergy of his diocese: "There is no sin in racing or betting, any more than there is sin in drinking; excessive betting is sin, just as excessive drinking is sin." Then, as showing how he arrived at this conclusion, he added: "If a man says, 'I will bet you £5 that it will not rain tomorrow,' I think it would take a long time to prove from the Bible that that man was guilty of a sin." The trouble with the learned bishop in this case was not so much in his view of betting as in his view of the Bible. He seemed to suppose that unless a perilous practise is specifically condemned in the Bible, it cannot be reckoned a sinful practise; whereas the principles enunciated in the Bible are sufficiently comprehensive

and clear to prove that it may be sinful for us to indulge in a perilous practise which is not in itself a sin.

The Bible does not declare cabbage-eating to be a sin; but if, during a season of cholera, or at any other time, a man's physician should tell him that for him to eat cabbage would be sheer suicide, does it need any proof-text from the Bible to show that cabbage-eating by that man would be sinful? The Bible would exhibit to that man the principle by which his conduct should be guided, but it would give him no explicit rule as to cabbage-eating. Even if he were to find in the Bible narrative that patriarchs, prophets, and apostles had eaten cabbage freely, that fact would not make it any the less sinful for him to eat cabbage in the face of its probable consequences to him and to his. And it matters not whether the illustration be taken from the cabbage-garden, the orchard, or the vineyard.

If, indeed, the Bible is properly reckoned as a book in which are to be found explicit rules of conduct in every emergency, it would seem to be strangely incomplete in its categories of good and evil performances. What Bible texts explicitly forbid the counterfeiting of government money, the forging of another's name, the cutting of public telegraph wires, the distilling of whisky



without a permit from the authorities, the "watering" of the capital stock of the company which one controls or of the milk which one offers for sale? There is a great deal of downright rascality current in the community at the present day which can be shown to be immoral and sinful by a reference to the principles enunciated in the Bible, but which is not declared to be a sin by any specific rule of the Bible text. And this is because the Bible is a book of principles instead of a book of rules.

A denomination of Christians which is very rigid in its practises, and very literal in its interpretation of Bible texts, was called on at one of its formal conferences to declare whether bicycle riding was allowable for its members. Turning to the Bible, with the belief that a specific rule must be found applicable for every such case it actually gave utterance to the decision that bicycle riding was improper for Christian believers, because of its undoubted popularity; "for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

It is true that the ancient Levitical law included a great number of specific rules of conduct, as illustrative of the application of the great principles of the Bible to everyday life in all its details; but those rules were for a single people and

for a limited period, and their purpose was rather to show how Bible principles might apply to all human practise, than to indicate the only lines of human practise in which Bible principles were to find their application.

There is a decided unwillingness in the popular mind, and indeed in many a professional mind, to accept this view of the Bible as the correct view; for it would be so much easier to learn one's duty without the study of principles than it is to study in order to this learning, that it seems to the average man that if the Bible is good for anything as a guide of conduct, it must be as a book of rules rather than as a book of principles. What a relief it would be to most minds to have a Bible that would tell a man specifically just what is right, and just what is wrong, in every imaginable crisis of affairs; just what he may do, and just what he must not do, in every sphere of human conduct !

If only the Bible were thus divinely arranged, and a full index of subjects were added to it, how simple would be the matter of learning one's duty in life ! Any one could turn to the topics in the Bible index and learn for himself the right or wrong of a mooted question. " Backgammon, " " Betting, " " Bicycles, " " Billiards, " " Cards, " " Church Fairs, " " Cider, " " Civil Service Re-

form," "Dancing," "Free Trade," "Gambling," "Golf," "Grab Bags," "Horse Racing," and so on all the way down to "Operas," "Pool Rooms," "Prohibition," "Theater-going," "Unfermented Wine," and "Woman's Suffrage." A mere child could find the references when the index showed the page of the rule in the premises. This would seem to the average mind, such a gain over the tedious process of hunting out the Bible principle involved, and then studying over its application to the case in question! There is a difference in these two ways; but the one way is that which man would prefer, while the other is that which God sees to be best.

V

QUESTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP NOT  
ALWAYS IMPORTANT

Who wrote a document is sometimes deemed all-important in considering its value; and again it is not so deemed. If it is a promissory note, the personality of the signer is counted the chief thing in an estimate of its pecuniary worth. If it is a last will and testament, it pivots entirely on the authenticity of the signature. On the other hand, when one reads on a public guide-post a direction to a village or city which he desires to reach, he is more interested in the direction than in the question of its authorship. If he is a sensible man, he usually takes it for granted that the guide-post was set up by some one who knew the road, and who desired to help seekers of that place, and the traveler is likely to keep on his course, nothing doubting.

Yet there have been misplaced guide-posts and deceived travelers. It is possible that this guide-post was erected in ignorance, or with a desire to mislead and deceive, and that he who follows its directions will go astray. If one stops to think, he has to consider these truths; and of

those who do think, nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of every one thousand cannot have positive evidence of the authority and knowledge and right purpose of the original writer of the time-worn guide-post which has led successive generations of travelers on their way. They must take it for granted that those who went before them, following the directions on the guide-post as it stands, were on the right track, and can be imitated prudently.

If a man who was crossing a desert plain, and thirsted for water, were to come to a finger-post pointing to a tempting hollow just beyond the ordinary pathway, with the words, "To an ever-flowing spring," what would be thought of that man if he were to fail to turn towards that spot, because he did not know who wrote those directions, and he was unwilling to follow an unknown guide? Suppose, further, that that man had been told by different travelers over that same road that they had turned to that spring and been refreshed, and that, although they were not sure who wrote it originally, they could testify to the accuracy of the direction,—suppose that that man still refused to turn to the spring because of the lack of evidence of authorship, and famished at the foot of the finger-post, waiting for further evidence! Would not the universal

verdict be that his foolish questioning had been his deserved destruction ?

Is there nothing of this sort in the sphere of intellectual or of spiritual life? Are we sure of the hand that inscribed all the directions on the guide-posts along the way of life in the books of Holy Scripture? Or is a knowledge of that hand comparable in importance with the directions found there? Would it not be folly to refuse to heed those directions which have guided generation after generation of seekers of the way and the water of life, because there is fair question as to the hand that first inscribed those directions?

Many Bible scholars spend much precious time in discussing questions as to the proportion of the first five books of the Old Testament actually written by Moses, or of the number of Psalms written by David. And yet, as showing that these questions are not of chief importance, the most positive of such scholars do not claim to know who was the author of such books as Judges, and Kings, and Chronicles, and Ruth, and Esther, and Job, and Daniel, even while they admit the importance of the truths recorded in those books.

No book of the Old Testament canon is of more importance and value, as bearing on the

coming of the Messiah as recorded in the New Testament, than the book of Malachi. Yet just who wrote the book of Malachi neither Jewish nor Christian scholars have claimed to know. All that we can be confident of is that the name of its writer was not "Malachi." "Malachi" represents the writer's office or mission, but not his name. Yet of what supreme importance to the race have been the directions on the Malachi guide-post, pointing out the coming of the Messiah as the world's Saviour. Would it not indeed be folly to refuse to heed the pointing of that spiritual finger-post because its inscriber is not known, while the verity of its inscription has been proved by the test of two thousand years?

Take again, for instance, a single illustration of methods in New Testament criticism. Do not some thirsty, groping travelers hesitate to follow the directions given in what is commonly known as the Fourth Gospel, because they are not entirely certain as to its original authorship, and are unwilling to follow an unknown guide? There is more spiritual help proffered in that one book than in any other of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. All that is in the other books of the Bible has added light thrown on it through the words of that one book. More persons testify to

the surpassing help given to those who follow these teachings than do as to any other portion of the Bible. Yet there are those who actually famish for spiritual refreshing, and who grope in spiritual darkness, because they are not quite sure as to the authorship of the Gospel, and are unwilling to receive the Water of Life, and to walk in the Light of Life, until they have more evidence as to the authorship of the book. Is not this strange ?

An exceptionally intelligent student who had come to accept the general views of Darwin and Huxley and Spencer, and who called himself an agnostic, was familiar with the strongest writings of those of that school. But one day he thought he would look fairly at what was called the strongest presentation of the Christian side of truth, and he took up the Fourth Gospel, and read it through from beginning to end. He simply took it as a book, aside from any outside evidence as to its authenticity. When he had read it through, he said to himself :

“ The One of whom that story tells either is the Saviour of the world or ought to be.”

Because of what that book told him of that Person, he was ready to heed the call of that Person when he said :

“ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and



drink," and again, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Because of thus reading that book, instead of waiting for outside evidence of its authorship, that true scholar is a follower of the Light of the World, pointing others to the finger-post that indicates the direction out of the shadow into the sun.

That is the way it has been with many a trained scholar and honest inquirer. Similarly it is with those of humbler and more simple minds. When Bishop Patteson began his work among the savages of the islands of Melanesia, he wasted no time in teaching the early history of the human race, and the progress and development of religious doctrine. He began at once with the simple yet profound teachings of the Fourth Gospel as it stands in our Bibles, and his success evidenced the correctness of his method.

For eighteen centuries the children of men and the children of God who have followed the pointing of that spiritual finger-post, have walked in the unfading light, and have been refreshed at the Fountain that satisfies all thirst. None who would consent to be thus guided have ever been led astray. The spiritual history of our race has been shaped by the teachings of that book as by

no other book, human or divine. Why should any hesitate or doubt because of subordinate questions of authorship, when the internal evidence of truth in the book is so strong, and so many generations have followed safely the way it points out ?

What shall we say of the poor doubters who famish at the foot of the spiritual finger-post, straining their weak eyes to discover whether there be not some reason to believe that certain letters of the inscription show a later date or another artist than the alleged author of the direction ? “ Lord, open their eyes, that they may see. ”

## VI

### LOVE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, LAW IN THE NEW

“Law is the religion of the Old Testament, Love is the religion of the New.” That is a popular idea, among Christians, as to the Bible and its teachings. The idea is proclaimed in this form of statement in pulpit and in press so frequently, if not so generally, that very many accept it as not to be questioned or qualified. Yet it might, with equal fairness and propriety, be asserted that “Love is the religion of the Old Testament, and Law is the religion of the New.” Both statements are true in a sense: neither statement is complete by itself, or as ordinarily understood. In God’s government, and in God’s revelation of himself, love is in all his law, and all his law is in love. Whoever fails to recognize this truth, fails to understand the Bible as a revelation of God, in both the Old Testament and the New.

If, indeed, it could be shown that the New Testament is not consistent with the Old, and that it presents God as of a different spirit from that in which he is revealed in the earlier disclosures of himself to man, it would be necessary to accept

one of these Testaments as true, and to reject the other as not true. If it could be shown that Jesus Christ was not a manifestation of God as God was from the beginning, then either God or Jesus Christ would have to be accepted as the object of worship and of confidence, as the other could not be; for "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace,"—or of unity. If the claims of Christianity be urged as those of a new religion, with no place in the world's history prior to twenty centuries ago, they bear no comparison with the claims of Christianity as the flower and fruit of Judaism, rooted in the love of God to man, as shown in law and promise and guard and guidance in all the centuries told of, from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Judas Maccabeus, and again from John the Baptist to John the Apocalyptist.

That love is only, or primarily, or mainly, of the New Testament, in contrast with the Old, is a comparatively modern error, widespread though it be to-day. It did not come from a careful study of the teachings, nor from an apprehension of the spirit, of the Old Testament. It was not taught by Jesus or his apostles. It is not a declaration of the New Testament. It was not presented as the view of the early Christian teachers. St. Augustine, for instance, distinctly

affirmed the opposite. He said, "If . . . all divine Scripture, which was written aforetime [in the Old Testament], was written with a view of presignifying the Lord's advent; and if whatever has been committed to writing in times subsequent to these, and established by divine authority [in the New Testament], is a record of Christ, and admonishes us of love, it is manifest that on those two commandments of love to God and love to man hang not only all the law and the prophets, which at the time when the Lord spoke to that effect were as yet the only Holy Scripture, but also all those books of the divine literature which have been written at a later period for our health, and consigned to remembrance. Wherefore, in the Old Testament there is a veiling of the New, and in the New Testament there is a revealing of the Old." Love is in law, and there is law in love. Or, as Browning phrases it, by the lips of David as foreseeing the greater Son of David: "I report, as a man may of God's work,—all's love, yet all's law."

When God manifested himself to his people Israel at Sinai, with lightnings and thunderings and the voice of a trumpet and the smoking of the mountain, and when the people were affrighted, and stood afar off, Moses bade them fear not, for God had come, not for their punish-

ment, but for their good. At that time God made a covenant of love with his people, and the Ten Words of that loving covenant, not the Ten Commandments of an arbitrary law as we are accustomed to consider them, were written on two stone tablets, to be kept in a casket, or the "Ark of the Covenant," as a permanent memorial. That the Israelites understood love to be at the basis of this law, or this covenant, was shown in the fact that when the law was rewritten, or repeated, in Deuteronomy, the sum of the law was given in this form:

"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates" (Deut. 6: 4-9).

This summary or substance of the Covenant of Love between God and his people was inscribed

on the "mezuzah" attached to the door frame of every pious Jew's home, as it was also written in the phylacteries bound on the forehead and on the hand of the stricter Jew. As it was in more ancient times, so it was in the days of Jesus, and so it is to-day. It was in the very heart of the Levitical law that it was also commanded, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart," "but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19: 17, 18). And that both an enemy and a stranger were to be included in the scope of neighborly love was shown by the Mosaic injunctions, "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Exod. 12: 49); "The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the homeborn among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19: 34); "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again" (Exod. 23: 4, 5). It is in the Proverbs of old that we read,

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;  
 And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:  
 For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head,  
 And Jehovah will reward thee"

(Prov. 25: 21, 22).

These teachings are not first found in the Ser-

mon on the Mount, or in the other words of Jesus, or of his disciples, but in the Old Testament. Is there not love in the religion which enjoins them? When Jesus declared that another religion than his was taught by "them of old time," he did not refer to the writers of the Old Testament, but to the popular commentators of a later time—who had perverted the meaning of the love-filled law.

When Jesus asked a questioning Jewish teacher of the law what he understood to be the main requirements of the law, the teacher promptly replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." (Luke 10: 27.) Jesus then said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." On another occasion Jesus himself cited as correct the Old Testament teaching of God's requirement, in answer to a Jewish scribe's question as to what was duty. This scribe, speaking as one well instructed in the truths of the Old Testament, replied, "Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offer-



ings and sacrifices" (Mark 12: 32, 33). The comment of Jesus on that answer was, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus saw love in the Old Testament; so did that Jewish scribe.

It is true that there was progress in the disclosure of God's love according as man was capable of comprehending its fulness, its tenderness, and its limitless scope; but in the earliest ages man was shown that God was actuated by love for him in all his dealings with him. As soon as man felt his need of forgiveness and salvation, God promised to open a way of restoration for him (Gen. 3: 15). Just because Abraham was willing to trust God utterly, God called him his "friend," and treated him accordingly (Gen. 12: 1-4; 15: 1-6; 18: 17-19; 2 Chron. 20: 7). This was long before the day of Moses at Sinai. Afterward God told Israel tenderly of his love for that people: "Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples; but because Jehovah loveth you. . . . And he will love thee" (Deut. 7: 7, 8, 13). God's love for man was not because of man's lovableness, but because of God's lovingness. Love, and mercy, and compassion, and tenderness, are in the dif-

ferent books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi.

The Psalms are tremulous with these feelings :

“ For my father and my mother have forsaken me,  
But Jehovah will take me up ” (Psa 27: 10).

“ Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid  
up for them that fear thee,  
Which thou hast wrought for them that take refuge  
in thee, before the sons of men!”

(Psa. 31: 19.)

“ O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee:  
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,  
In a dry and weary land, where no water is. . . .  
Because thy lovingkindness is better than life;  
My lips shall praise thee ” (Psa. 63: 1, 3).

“ Jehovah is merciful and gracious,  
Slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness. . . .  
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,  
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities. . . .  
As far as the east is from the west,  
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.  
Like as a father pitieth his children,  
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him ” (Psa. 103:  
8, 10, 12, 13).

“ Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his loving-  
kindness,  
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!”  
(Psa. 107: 15.)

“ Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good:  
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever ”

(Psa. 118: 1).

Isaiah, whose prophecies are the gospel of the Old Testament, repeats and carries on this strain: "Thus saith Jehovah, . . . Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Isa. 43: 1-3). "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee" (Isa. 49: 15). "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isa. 66: 13). Not to sons of Abraham, or to children of Israel, alone, is God thus a loving and tender Father, in the thought of the Evangelical Prophet. "For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name" (Isa. 63: 16).

Thus with the later prophets also. How God pleads in tireless love with his disobedient children! "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?"

(Jer. 3: 4). "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31: 3). "Ye my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah" (Ezek. 34: 31). "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hos. 2: 23). "Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3: 17). "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zech. 2: 8). "I have loved you, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" (Mal. 1: 2). "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" (Mal. 2: 10). "Then they that feared the Lord spake one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3: 16, 17).

Who shall say that in the Old Testament love is not more prominent than law? Of course,

there is law, and the exhibit of the consequences of its violation, in the Old Testament, as again in the New; but in the Old Testament, as in the New, there is shown love as back of all law, as evidenced in all law, and as promising redemption from the consequences of law violated by unloving man.

On the other hand, does not the law show itself in the New Testament, as binding in love on all of God's children? It is so emphasized by Jesus Christ, and so taught by his followers from Matthew to Paul. What more emphatic expression of the obligations of the law is found in all the Old Testament than in the words of Jesus in what is called the "Sermon on the Mount,"—not of Mt. Sinai, but of the mountain of Galilee: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteous-

ness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5: 17-20). "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21). Again Jesus said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23: 2, 3).

It is Jesus who foretells the future punishment of evil-doers, the violators of God's laws and commandments. There are no such pictures of future judgment and of hell for the disobedient, in the Old Testament, as Jesus gives in the New. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13: 41, 42). "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set

the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. . . . Then shall he say . . . unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. 25: 31-46). "That servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12: 47).

This is taught not only in the earlier words of Jesus, but in his later words also; not alone to the Jewish multitudes, but to the inner circle of his disciple friends. It was on the night of his betrayal that he said to those dearest to him, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "If a man love me, he will keep my word [my commandments]: and my Father will love him. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word [the commandment] which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (John 14: 15, 21, 23, 24). And again, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even



as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15: 10, 14). Here is law as well as love; love shown in the giving and in the keeping of law.

The disciples of Jesus gave prominence to the observance of law as the proof of love, as the evidence of faith. Paul, who extolled faith as a means of salvation, by no means ignored or undervalued the demands of law. On the contrary, he says, "Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law" (Rom. 3: 31). He speaks, moreover, of the "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works: . . . unto them that . . . obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jews first, and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2: 5-11).

Again he says: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be



good or bad. Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5: 10, 11). "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed . . . in that day" (2 Thess. 1: 7-10).

James says: "Faith apart from works is barren;" "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. . . . For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. 2: 20, 24, 26). Peter says: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment" (2 Pet. 2: 9). John, the apostle of love, says: "Hereby know we that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2: 3, 4). "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [God] is righteous; he that doeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3: 7, 8).

“ This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous ” (1 John 5: 3). “ This is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it ” (2 John 6). It is in John’s book of Revelation that we repeatedly find the figure of the lake of fire burning with brimstone, as a place of punishment for the disobedient, and all the opposers of God, who maketh the law (Rev. 14: 9, 10; 19: 20; 21: 8). Who will say, then, that there is no law in the New Testament and in its religion?

Love and law are in the Old Testament; law and love are in the New. That “ God is love; and [that] he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him ” (1 John 4: 16),—is not a truth of the New Testament, and the New Covenant, alone; it was in the Old Testament, or the Old Covenant, also. God was always in Christ, and God always bore for man the love which showed itself in Christ as the manifestation of God’s love for man. “ Before Abraham was born, I am,” said Jesus to the Jews (John 8: 58). “ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad ” (John 8: 56). God spoke out of the thunderings of Mt. Sinai, telling of his love unto the thousandth genera-

tion of those who would love him and keep his commandments (Exod. 20: 6). Prophet, and psalmist, and scribe, and apostle, alike recognized love as the prompting and requirement of law, Godward and manward. "Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" said Micah (Micah 6: 7, 8). The Psalmist says:

"It is time for Jehovah to work;  
 For they have made void thy law.  
 Therefore I love thy commandments  
 Above gold, yea, above fine gold.  
 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning  
 all things to be right" (Psa. 119: 126-128).

Said the Jewish scribe, "To love him [the Lord thy God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12: 33). The Apostle Paul sums up the whole matter in the words: "He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. . . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom. 13: 8, 10).

Mere obedience to law could not save a man.

God never taught that it could. Man never had reason to think that it could. Love was shown in God's laws; love prompted man to doing as the loving God wanted done; love trusted God beyond all sight and proof. In the Old Testament this was taught in precept and in promise. In the New Testament it was taught in fresh prominence and power, by the crowning evidence of God's love, and the addition of a new motive for man's recognition of it, in the gift of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Son of man, Sovereign and Saviour. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3: 16). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4: 10, 11).

## VII

### IN HIS NAME, NOT FOR HIS SAKE

A Christian believer is specifically assured that he can come to God "in the name of" Jesus. No such assurance is given him, in the Bible, that he will have his prayers answered "for the sake of" Jesus. Yet the phrase "for Christ's sake," or "for His sake," is even more commonly used in modern prayers than "in Christ's name," or "in His name." What is the reason for this? Is the error a common one of supposing that "in His name" means the same as "for His sake"? Or is there no particular thought in the ordinary mind as to the meaning of either phrase? It certainly is too important a matter not to be well understood and carefully considered.

Jesus said to his disciples, when he was to leave them for a season, as to his return by the Holy Spirit, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you [who are] in my name. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: [now] ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full (John 16: 23, 24)." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may

be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do" (John 14: 13). "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John 14: 20.) What is here meant by "in my name"? What, indeed, is one's "name" as the term is used in the Bible, in the Old Testament and the New, and in primitive thought and customs generally?

One's "name," as thus spoken of, is not a mere designation, or label; it is one's truest self, or personality. It enwraps one's very being as a covering and protection, as the flag of one's country enwraps and shields its every citizen when endangered. Thus "the name of Jehovah is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. 18: 10.) It was while enclosed in that name that David confidently met Goliath, and vanquished him. David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee [enclosed] in the name of the Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied." (1 Sam. 17: 45). Similarly, one who is in Christ is sure of acceptance with Christ and with God, as being in the common name, or personality, of the Father, of the Son, and of the disciple; or, as Jesus expresses it, "I am in my Father, and

ye in me, and I in you" (John 14: 20). That is being "in His name," living "in His name," praying "in His name."

In this view of the truth, it is not the mention of the name of Jesus, but it is the being in the name of Jesus, that gives one acceptance with Jesus and with the Father. Indeed, it would perhaps better convey to many the idea of the promise, as Jesus gave it to his disciples, if the clauses in our English translation were arranged differently, without in any degree doing violence to them: "If ye [being] in my name, shall ask me anything, that will I do" (John 14: 14). "Whatsoever ye [being] in my name, shall ask, that will I do" (John 14: 13).

Thus Jesus communes with his Father concerning the Name that is his, and his Father's, and in which he desires to have his disciples kept: "Holy Father, keep them in thy Name, which thou hast given me [that is, keep in thy Name, them which thou hast given me], that they may [in thy Name] be one, even as we are [one]. While I was with them [here in the flesh] I kept them in thy Name. . . . But now I come to thee" (John 17: 11-13). And, therefore, Jesus confidently commends to his Father's keeping all his who are in that Holy Name.

The Revision has made some changes that bring out the truth more clearly. For instance, the King James version had it, at Acts 4: 12, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." The Revision more correctly renders this: "Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." This shows the difference—"wherein," not "whereby."

How different is this idea from the one that might seem to be conveyed in the common conclusion to a prayer, "All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour," as though we, the petitioners, were apart from the one prayed to, and not one with him and in him; he in the Father, and we in him, and he in us. No one who feels that he is in Christ—enclosed in Christ's name—one with the Father in Christ, ought to address God as though he were apart from him, not privileged to come to him freely, trustfully, making known his needs and desires.

For Christ's sake, for the Lord's sake, for Jesus' sake, for the gospel's sake, for the truth's sake, and other such phrases—those are very different terms. If they are used in prayer, they ought to be used intelligently. Where such terms are employed in the New Testament, the



context plainly shows their meaning. "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5: 11). "In their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake" (Matt. 10: 17). "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10: 39). "We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. 4: 10). It is evident what such phrases mean. "For the sake of" Christ is for the cause of Christ. One can ask help "for the sake of" Christ when he feels that his cause is identified with Christ as over against Christ's enemies, and that to give help to the petitioner is to win honor to Christ's cause.

In the Old Testament times, Jehovah was said to have set his name in the tabernacle, or in the temple, as the central place of his worship. In view of this fact, Jerusalem and the Jewish nation could ask for protection for his "name's sake," because his honor was supposed to be involved in the protection of that place and people. But this was obviously on God's own account that he was to act, and not on account of the people petitioning for help. For "his sake," or for "his name's sake," was a direct petition for God's own glory, not for a reflected glory

accruing to his people because of their appeal to him, or their dependence on him.

As Christ's disciples, we are authorized to be in his name, to speak in his name, to ask in his name, confidently, nothing doubting. All our prayers ought to be while we are in his name, whether his name be mentioned or not. There are special occasions, conditions, and circumstances, when it would be manifestly proper for us to ask help from God for Christ's sake. In such cases, we ought to pray understandingly, as realizing our peculiar reason for thus praying. But we ought not to fall into the common error of supposing that "in His name" is in any sense identical with "for His sake."

## VIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MISSION TO AND THROUGH BELIEVERS

In the popular thought of Christians, an important mission of the Holy Spirit is in arresting the attention of unbelievers, striving with those who are out of Christ, bringing sinners under conviction of sin, and converting or regenerating the ungodly. Yet there is little, if anything, in the New Testament to justify this belief, or to lead one to suppose that the mission of the Holy Spirit is directly to any who are not already disciples of Jesus.

As to the Holy Spirit's work and workings, the New Testament teachings, both in precept and illustration, are explicit and uniform. The Holy Spirit dwells with, and abides in, believers in Jesus, having no immediate communication with unbelievers. Whatever mission to the ungodly the Holy Spirit has, is exercised mediately through believers, not immediately on the unbeliever. This truth is of main importance to the believer, who so often fails to perceive it, and hence to avail himself of the power awaiting his acceptance of it; while the consequences

of the believer's failure to recognize it are momentous to unbelievers who are neglected on account of this error.

It is in, and by, and through the Holy Spirit's power, that believers in Jesus can know the truth, can proclaim the truth effectively, or can influence in favor of the truth any unbeliever to whom they are sent, or in whose behalf they labor and pray. It is by and through the agency of believers who are in the power of the Holy Spirit that any unbeliever is attracted to the truth, or is shown his sinfulness, or is won to the loving service of Jesus. The trusting believer in Jesus is, as it were, the agent, the instrument, the avenue, of the Holy Spirit, in behalf of the outside world; and the Holy Spirit is the supreme source of all knowledge and power and practical efficiency on the part of the trusting believer in Jesus, both in that believer's personal attainment and in his evangelistic endeavor in the world. On all these points the New Testament teachings would seem to be unqualified and unmistakable.

Jesus promised to his disciples an unfailing supply of the satisfying water of life, for themselves and for others. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive" (John 7, 39), not, as so many would

seem to read the promise, "This spake he of the Spirit, by which they that receive were to be made believers in him." Again he said: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you [my disciples] another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world [the outside unbelievers] cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14: 16, 17). As to the source of all power to his disciples in their witnessing for him, Jesus said specifically to those disciples, at the very time of his ascension: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and [in that power] ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). In fulfilment of these promises of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon his disciples at the following day of Pentecost, and those disciples were thenceforward "filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13: 52); as it is the privilege of every disciple of Jesus to be, at the present time, and until the coming again of Jesus.

This truth the disciples understood and illustrated in all their teaching and in all their toils. When Peter was first preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, and his sin-convicted

hearers asked what was their duty, in view of their transgression and its consequences, "Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye [also] shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). He did not say, "Receive ye the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then you may be baptized as disciples of Jesus Christ." Again, when standing before the Jewish council, Peter and his fellow-apostles testified of Jesus as the crucified and risen Saviour, saying: "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5: 32); not, "God causes to obey him those who have the gift of the Holy Spirit." The apostles and other disciples were "all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 4). Peter, as a preacher, was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4: 8). Stephen, as a preacher, was "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6: 5). Barnabas, as a preacher, was "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11: 24). Paul, as a preacher, was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13: 9). The entire church in all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria was edified and was multiplied when it was "walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9: 31).

When the prayers and alms of the Gentile Cornelius had come up to God acceptably, and God had sent an angel messenger to direct Cornelius as to his duty, it was not until Peter, himself a man already in the power of the Holy Spirit, was present to proclaim to Cornelius and his fellow-hearers the truth concerning Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, that "the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word." Even when Jesus himself met Saul the persecutor, on the road to Damascus, and summoned him to his service, it was not until three days were passed that Saul received the Holy Spirit; and then that blessing came to him in the appointed way through Ananias, who before this was a disciple of Jesus. Saul's conversion was not by the Holy Spirit, but through the presence and voice of Jesus. Then Saul was a subject for the Holy Spirit's mission through a Spirit-endowed believer in Jesus. Afterwards Paul found a dozen disciples or so in Ephesus, who were apparently in the state in which he had been in that three days' interval of darkness before Ananias was brought to him. "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" asked Paul of these men. "And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was [yet] given." Then he laid his hands on those

believers, and "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19: 2, 6) also.

It was apparently in this view of the order of the Holy Spirit's workings, and of the scope of the Holy Spirit's work, that Paul wrote to believing disciples in Galatia and in Rome: "Because ye are sons [of God], God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4: 6). "The fruit of the Spirit [in the hearts of believers] is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5: 22, 23)—all the Christian graces, in fact. "If [therefore] we [disciples] live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us [as disciples] also walk" (Gal. 5: 25). "For we know not [even] how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit [in our behalf], because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8: 26, 27). And so throughout the teachings of Paul and of the other New Testament writers.

It is a strange fact, that, notwithstanding the explicitness and uniformity of the New Testament teachings on this subject, there is a widespread popular opinion that the Holy Spirit's



work is directly and immediately on or in the heart of the unbeliever, without the intervention or agency of the Christian believer. To hear what is said in the sermons, or sung in the hymns, or prayed in the prayers, of many Christians, one might believe that the Holy Spirit is sent directly to the unbelieving sinner, to strive with him, to show him his sin, and to point him to the Saviour; and that therefore the Christian preacher or teacher has rather to wait the results of this work of the Spirit, than to be the instrument or the avenue of this work. Many a Christian seems to think that the Holy Spirit's work is that of a revival preacher, in moving sinners to repentance by a direct appeal to their consciences and understandings, instead of stirring up Christians to appeal, in the power of the Spirit, to unbelievers to believe and to turn to God.

It would almost seem as if Christians thought that preachers and teachers, at home or abroad, were not a necessity, in the declared plan of God's working, in order to the Holy Spirit's evangelizing of the world; that, in fact, the Holy Spirit—in the present dispensation—would be just as likely to reach sinners without the intervention of Christian believers as with them. That this error of opinion has no basis in the teach-

ings of the Bible, does not, certainly, make it any the less dangerous in its practical influence; nor does this lack of foundation seem to hinder its acceptance by many a professed student of the Bible.

There would even seem to be more reasonableness in the high ecclesiastical view that the Holy Spirit abides in, and works through, the collective church alone, for the winning of sinners and the saving of souls, than for the unbiblical view, so common among Protestant Christians, that the Holy Spirit works in and on the hearts of the ungodly for their winning to Christ. There is no justification in the New Testament text for the claim that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the sinner to induce him to believe in Jesus or to commit himself to him.

It is true that, in this present dispensation of the Spirit, all power in the evangelizing of the world, and in the swaying of the hearts of men towards Christ and in the service of Christ, is primarily with the Holy Spirit. But it is also true that the Holy Spirit, according to the Bible teachings, works in and by and through believers in Jesus. Hence if one who is not a believer in Jesus is to be won to discipleship, the question is not, Will the Holy Spirit work on his mind immediately; or will the Holy Spirit work through

one who already believes? for that question the Bible has already answered. The question would rather seem to be, By which disciple of Jesus is the Holy Spirit to work for the winning of this sinner to the loving service of the Saviour? If indeed a sinner be won through the Bible itself, that is really being won through the believer who wrote that portion of the Bible. The Holy Spirit can use the written words, like the spoken words, of a chosen messenger of God to an unbelieving soul. But in every case the Spirit reaches the believer mediately, not immediately.

If the power of the Holy Spirit's drawing were to be likened, for a mere figure of speech, to magnetic attraction, the disciple through whom the Holy Spirit works would be the already magnetized piece of steel, and the outside sinner would be the bit of iron in its natural state. The natural iron is not moved by itself or in its own power, neither is it, in the present course of things, reached directly by the primitive lodestone; but it is by means of the magnetized steel that this iron is now lifted and drawn in the direction of the Polar Star of the universe. The power is the mysterious magnetic attraction, but the method of that attraction's working is through the magnetized steel that was once a bit of impotent iron. So it is with him that is

won of the Spirit, or by whom the Spirit wins, in the plan of God's working.

If Christians generally would but realize this truth concerning the mission and workings of the Holy Spirit, what an added sense of responsibility would rest on them, as the chosen instruments and avenues of the Holy Spirit's power in their sphere of labor and of influence! Without the Holy Spirit's power no Christian can pray aright, or study aright, or teach aright, or live aright. And unless Christians are ready, as the believing disciples of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, for the declaring of the truth impressively to outside sinners, the one agency which God chooses to honor for the reaching of those sinners is lacking—because of the unreadiness of believers.

Sinners will not, it is true, be drawn to Jesus unless the Holy Spirit draws them; but we have no reason to suppose that the Holy Spirit will draw sinners to Jesus except through believers in Jesus; for this is the disclosed plan and order of the Holy Spirit's working in this present world of ours. This is the Bible teaching, even if it be not the common Christian idea.

## IX

### CONVERSION MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY, NOT GOD'S

As a natural consequence of the common misunderstanding of the mission and work of the Holy Spirit, there is a widespread popular feeling that sinners are converted from their evil course to the service of God, rather than that they themselves turn to God, when they see it to be their duty to do so. The incorrect language of our ordinary English Bible, in referring to this act or process of conversion, has been a fruitful cause of this misconception.

In our old version it would appear that Jesus said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 3). But in the new, and more correct, version it reads, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." In our old version, again, Jesus is said to have counseled Peter, in view of his coming denial and repentance, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22: 32). But the new version gives it thus: "When once

thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." According to the old version, Peter preached, after the day of Pentecost, to the people in the temple courts: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." According to our new version, Peter's call was: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19).

These differences in the two versions, in their teachings on this point, represent fairly well the difference between the popular idea of "conversion," and the Bible idea of it. The popular thought is that conversion is wrought on or in a man by outside influences, or by a force from above. The Bible thought is that conversion is the act of the individual himself, for which he is directly responsible, however he may be affected by influences from without and above. The old version seemed to say to the sinner, "Be converted." The new version distinctly says to him, "Turn" (Matt. 13: 15; Mark 4: 12; Luke 22: 32; John 12: 40; Acts 3: 19; 28: 27). There is no such command, either in word or spirit as "Be converted," in the new and more correct version. Yet that command is still repeated in pulpit and press, as if it were justified by the Bible teachings, and many believe that it is not at variance with the teachings of the Bible.

The practical bearing of this truth on the appeals made to sinners to submit themselves to Christ, and on sinners in their response to these appeals, is incalculably important. It makes a vast difference whether a man is summoned to immediate personal action in his attitude and conduct toward Christ, or whether he is led to suppose that he must wait passively for some process on or in him which shall give him different views and feelings, and make him a different man. The tendency of this error as to the Bible call to men has been manifest in innumerable instances, whatever good has been done, in spite of it, by those who held the error, or who were appealed to in view of it.

The writer knew an upright, God-fearing man, who was a firm believer in the Bible and an earnest student of it, who was faithful in all his duties as he understood them, constant in private prayer, conducting family worship day by day in his household, a teacher in the Sunday-school, and an example to Christian believers in his relations to God and to his fellow-men, who was kept back from communion with Christ's people in church fellowship by the thought that he had not been converted, and that he could not properly connect himself with the church until he had been. He grew gray in his waiting to be con-



verted, and finally he died without being conscious of any experience which seemed to him like conversion as he was taught to expect it. Of course, God knows his own, and will care for them, however they may be misled by wrong teachings or mis-translations; but they may suffer seriously all their lifetime from a lack of privileges to which they were entitled, but which were wrongly denied them.

When the writer urged upon a young man his personal duty to become a follower of Christ, the answer was, "I wish I could be, but I am not converted, nor can I convert myself. I go to church regularly, and I put myself in the way of a blessing, but conversion doesn't come." That young man had been taught by his parents, and his church teachers, that he must be converted, and he waited aimlessly for the result.

In another instance, a young man of exceptionally high standards of thought and conduct told the writer that he had put himself in the way of the best influences, in the hope of "being converted," but without avail. He had sat under good preaching, and had been talked to and prayed with by excellent men; but he was not converted. There has been many a case like this.

When, again, the writer urged upon a man the duty of a change of attitude toward Christ,



and pressed him for a decision, the man said he would gladly begin immediately to follow Christ as his Master. They knelt together, and the writer prayed with and for the other. The other responded heartily, and, as he rose from his knees, he exclaimed:

"I guess it is all right now. I sort o' felt something break inside o' me just then."

He thought he was converted. If, in consequence of that thought, he was encouraged to trust Christ and serve him, he was advantaged thereby; but if he merely relied on his belief that he had had a saving experience, he was likely to become fixed in a harmful error.

On one occasion, when the writer talked with an ill-tempered, violently profane man, he was moved to rebuke the man for his godless course, and for his open defiance of the authority of God. At this the man changed his tone, and said whiningly:

"Oh! when it comes to that, I'm all right. I know I'm a rough fellow, but I was soundly converted twenty-three years ago the seventeenth of last September, and I've never lost that old hope."

All that that man had of religion was the mental record of his "sound" conversion, and his hopes rested on the saving power of that.

Mr. Moody tells of the definition of "conversion" given by a believer who was won to Christ while a soldier in the British army.

"It was just," he said, "Halt! About face! March!"

That is the Bible idea of conversion, as contrasted with the popular idea, illustrated in the other cases.

The writer heard a preacher telling his congregation, as they waited on his words of counsel, that they could not convert themselves, and that there was, in fact, nothing for them to do but to wait for God's movement in this matter. Such preaching would not lead the hearers to action, nor was it intended to.

As "conversion," in the Bible use of that term, is the deliberate turning of an individual toward God, it follows, as a matter of course, that a man may thus turn as often as he finds himself in a wrong attitude toward God, or facing in the wrong direction. When Andrew found Jesus, and was convinced that he was the Messiah, Peter turned, or "converted," and followed Jesus. When, again, Peter "turned" away from Jesus, by denying him, Jesus wanted him to turn, or convert, back again. Thus any man can turn, or convert, again, as many times as he goes astray.

This view of conversion does not necessarily affect the theological doctrines of "falling from grace" and of "the perseverance of saints." Whatever be thought on these points, the doctrine does not pivot on the meaning of the Bible word "convert." That word can hardly be in dispute.

In illustration of the fact, however, that a mistaken and unbiblical view of conversion is widespread and misleading, a circular sent broadcast through the country from a center of religious interest in New York City furnishes abundant evidence. The object of this circular is to obtain information for permanent preservation as "a study of conversion." It gives a series of specific questions which the person receiving it is desired to answer. Here are specimens of these questions, with this preliminary caution:

"Persons answering the following questions should be especially careful not to confuse beliefs and experiences of a later date with those of the time of conversion."

"Where, on what occasion, and under what circumstances, were you converted? Had you, before that moment, made up your mind that you would be converted if possible? Tell, in detail, what you then meant by conversion. Why did you desire it? What did you expect of it?"

. . . What was the state of your health?"

"Relate your conversion. What were the various thoughts in your mind, and the various feelings in your heart, at the moment of conversion?"

. . . Were you very much moved? By what or by whom were you moved?"

"Describe your feelings and your thoughts immediately after conversion. Were you aware that you had experienced conversion? In what particulars had you become changed?"

"If you have passed through more than one similar experience, or through other less momentous moral crises, describe each one separately, giving date of each."

In all these questions not a word is said as indicating or suggesting any sense of responsibility, on the part of the individual, for his turning from the wrong to the right, from self to God. All of them look not to a man's turning to God, but to a man's being converted to God.

Turning to God whenever one is away from him is the plain duty of believer and unbeliever. That is conversion. There is nothing in the Bible which, read and understood as it was written, would lead one to suppose otherwise. Of course, the power to turn, or to go forward, to halt or to move, to act, to speak, or to breathe, is from God; but when God calls a man to halt or

to turn, God is ready to give the man all necessary power to enable him to act accordingly.

Regeneration, whenever that takes place, is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is not the work of man. But the Bible never confounds regeneration with conversion; nor ought a man to make this mistake for himself or for others.

## X

### NEEDLESS WORRY AS TO BEING "BORN AGAIN"

Various theories of Christian "regeneration," or the "new birth," or the being "born again," have been held and taught by different Christians along the centuries, since the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus was first recorded in the Fourth Gospel. Yet, whatever be the view entertained, the new life is to be accepted as a gift or grace from God, and is not to be worried over as a duty or work on the part of the individual.

It has been claimed by many that Christian baptism is the means or vehicle of a new spiritual birth, or of regeneration. More than one denomination of Christians has practically made this opinion fundamental to its membership.

Again, it has been held by many that the term "conversion" is synonymous with "regeneration," and that "to be converted" is practically the same as to "be born again." This view it is, however, more difficult to reconcile with the Bible text since the Revisers have removed from the text the passive form, "be converted," and substituted, as more correct, the active form, "turn."

Other views also have been held with positiveness by Christian scholars and Bible students. And with all these views needless worry has often come to the individual sinner.

Without entering into a discussion as to the real meaning of the term to "be born again," or as to the precise nature of the new birth, or changed spiritual being, it is worth while to call attention to the unmistakable fact that Jesus does not in any place, nor does any inspired disciple of his, give a command to an individual soul to "be born again," or speak of a new birth as if it were a personal duty of the individual. Only a failure to perceive the force of the words of Jesus in that conversation with Nicodemus can account for the error, into which many have fallen, of supposing that the words "Ye must be born again" are in the nature of a command or of an obligation. It is the statement of a fact or a truth; it is not the imperative command to a duty.

In the first place, it is to be noted that it was not to the multitude on the hillside, or the shore, or by the way, that Jesus stated this truth, as if it were to enjoin on all a plain duty. It was in a conference at night-time with a theological professor. It is to be considered accordingly. No disciple of Jesus, according to the New Testa-

ment, repeated that statement to those who were called to serve and trust Jesus.

“Except one be born anew [or, from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Those are the words of Jesus. And again, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” This is not a command to a duty, but is a plain statement of a fact or a truth. It is a perversion of the Scriptures to quote the words as if they were a command.

Being born, the first time or the second time, is clearly not a duty to be performed by ourselves. No man can “born” himself. Turning to God, submitting himself to God—that is a duty. Being made a new man, being spiritually renewed, being given a clearer sight—that is a blessing from above. Turning, trusting—that is man’s part. Renewing, regenerating—that is God’s part. If we will do our part, God can be relied on to do his part. To doubt this is wrong and unjustifiable.

Yet this statement of a philosophical fact to a theological teacher is often used as if it were a command in an address to a child or to the childlike; and thus it is made a stumbling-block before, instead of a help towards or into, the kingdom of God. What sad consequences may result to those who are misled by their mistaken



guides, through this misconception of an important truth as declared by the Teacher of teachers!

It is because the writer himself groped and agonized for long years in the Christian life through being mistaught by those who knew no better, that he sounds a note of warning against supposing that being born again is a personal duty of the individual who would serve and trust Christ. Whatever view is held of the spiritual change spoken of in the words of Jesus, "Ye must be born anew," of one thing we may be sure,—they are not meant to teach any person that he is to wait outside the loving service of Christ until some great change is wrought in him, whereby he becomes personally conscious that he has another nature than before. The reference is clearly to God's part, not man's, in the blessing of salvation.

## XI

### IS THERE ANY REAL GAIN IN SALVATION?

As there is no possibility of salvation except to those who were lost, the very term salvation presupposes the idea of a lost condition. Hence, salvation has ever had an aspect that is not attractive to all. Many, very many, prefer to be counted among those who were ever stainless, rather than among those who have been cleansed; among the pure from the beginning rather than among the now redeemed. And this it is that is one of the hindrances to the gospel message. Thus it is in our day, and thus it was in the day of Jesus.

Salvation, the salvation of the lost, is the distinctive message of the New Testament; it is, indeed, in itself the "gospel," the "evangel," the "good news," which is the substance of that new revelation from God. The Old Testament shows God's requirements of man, and man's failure to conform to God's requirements; it discloses man's lost estate, and gives promises of a plan for his rescue. The New Testament brings forward God's plan of salvation for the lost, and

presses the offer of it upon all who are in need of it.

Not the reward of the sinless well-doer, but the salvation of the sinner, is the theme of themes of the gospel story. "They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick" (Luke 5: 31), said Jesus. And as showing that his mission was a new and a startling one, he added: "But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9: 13.) Again he said: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19: 10.) Over and over again our Lord affirmed this truth specifically, while he was illustrating it in his daily ministry of love. He welcomed publicans and sinners, moral outcasts as they were, to his following and companionship; and when he was criticised for this he said plainly that this was the main feature of his mission. He even went so far as to say that there was more rejoicing in heaven over those who were saved from a lost condition than over those who were never lost; and that here on earth, those who had greatest love for God were those who had had most forgiven them.

This was a shocking doctrine to the average well-doer in the days of our Lord; and it is a

doctrine that is still repugnant to the natural mind. The scribes and Pharisees, who were the most upright and religious classes in the community at that time, felt that this doctrine put a premium on evil-doing, and tended to make men believe that they would really be the gainers in the end by indulging in sin before coming into the active service of God. And there are not a few intelligent and earnest Christian believers at the present time who take the same view of this doctrine; nor is it to be wondered at, in one view of the case, that this is so.

Our Lord's parable of the Prodigal Son is a test illustration of this truth of the gain of salvation, in its attractiveness and in its more repellent features. A profligate son, who has wasted in evil-doing his possessions and his opportunities, is not only welcomed back to his home with signs of rejoicing, but is made the recipient of tokens of honor that seem to put him into a larger prominence in his father's house than was ever accorded to a son who had never been a profligate. From the time that that parable was spoken, down to the present hour, there have always been those whose sense of justice was outraged by the suggestion that a rescued profligate is to receive higher honor in God's presence than one who has never lapsed from

the path of duty. Yet that this is the plain teaching of the parable as it stands, and in the connection of its presenting, would seem to be unmistakable.

In very recent days a distinguished and most excellent clergyman declared in public comment on this parable, "For myself I immensely prefer the non-prodigal son, and so did the father." Another distinguished clergyman was reported as saying publicly, "I'm with the elder brother every time." These clergymen represent a large class of those who, in the modern pulpit or in our modern community, instinctively recoil from some aspects of the gospel of salvation. And this fact it is that raises the eminently practical and most important question, Is there any real gain in salvation?

Viewed simply as a matter of justice, the returned prodigal was not treated according to his deserts. It is to be borne in mind, however, that salvation is not a matter of justice, but is a matter of grace; and grace abounds, in God's plan of salvation, according to the opportunities for its exercise. The action of grace is, therefore, not to be judged by the claims of bald justice, but is to be looked at as an expression of the Divine love that has prompted it. Justice requires that "whatsoever a man sow-

eth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). When a man has sinned, justice demands his punishment; but grace may interpose and secure his pardon. It may even be true that "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom. 5: 20); and that added prominence comes in consequence to him who is the greatest trophy of God's grace in salvation. All this is, of course, apart from any question as to the philosophy of the plan of salvation, or the relations of God's action to principles of eternal justice. Strictly speaking, salvation is clearly not a matter of justice, but is a matter of grace. Salvation is not, however, unjust toward any; even though it is non-just—that is, not pivoted on justice in its original plan—toward those who are saved.

Take, for an illustration of this truth in another sphere, the workings of human surgery. Surgery is not a normal agency; it is an abnormal one. Its mission is to rescue from death the subjects of various destructive forces, rather than to minister to those who have never received harm. As a consequence of this mission of surgery, a skilful surgeon would naturally have more rejoicing over his success in behalf of a man who would have perished miserably but for his intervention, than he could have over

a hundred men whose condition never called for his aid. When, at the close of our Civil War, the United States Government would make known to the world the triumphs of its representative surgeons in their sphere, it issued a volume with full-page chromo-lithograph portraits of men who had been successfully operated upon after injuries that had left them mere physical wrecks. Every man in that roll of honor was a sadly maimed man; not a solitary unharmed military athlete was included in its numbers. More joy seemed to be shown by the Government over one person thus rescued from ruin than over a thousand men who had never responded to a surgeon's call. Was there any injustice in this proceeding? Who would claim that there was?

Could it be said, however, that this added honor put by the Government upon the successfully treated subjects of surgery was giving a premium to physical disability? Would any fair-minded man suppose that thereby the United States surgeons indicated their belief that a man with one leg was better off than a man with two, or that he who had lost the sight of an eye and the hearing of an ear was better fitted for the ordinary duties of life, after the war's campaigning, than if he had come out of



the war unscathed? No, no! It is not the being maimed to which honor is here given, but it is the being successfully treated while so fearfully maimed. So in the realm of salvation; not the wretched profligacy of the prodigal son, but the glorious rescue of the son lost through his profligacy, calls for the honor of the best robe, the signet ring, the fatted calf, and the household rejoicings. The son whose moral nature was a loser by his excesses must, in some sense, remain a loser permanently; but he will, nevertheless, have special honor in God's presence as a miracle of grace and redeeming love.

It is because so many fail to see the distinction here made between the gain of salvation from sin, and the gain of being a sinner as precedent to being saved, that they are thoughtlessly inclined to approve the course and the spirit of the elder brother in the parable, in comparison with the course and spirit of the younger brother. They are right in thinking that the elder brother did better than the younger, in remaining at home with his father instead of going off in evil courses. They are wrong in thinking that the elder brother was in any sense excusable for his lack of rejoicing that the lost was saved, and that his father's heart was made glad again.



Looked at in the light of the duty and the privileges of love, there is a despicable side to the character of that elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, with his cold-hearted, calculating, selfishly reputable morality. He had remained at home, it is true; but it was his home, and he was the gainer by remaining in it. So little, however, did he have of sympathy with his father, or of love for him, during all his life at home, that when he found that that poor old father's heavy heart had been made glad again by the return of a mourned-for son, his first impulse was to jeer at his father, to insult his father, to traduce his father, and to cause his father mental anguish by his baseless and selfish reproaches. He was angry. He was boastful. He charged his father with injustice. He was unfilial and unfraternal, and every way unloving. But his good father loved him even in spite of his unloveliness; as that father loved the other son in spite of his waywardness.

Salvation is of love. He who appreciates salvation is moved by love; and he who is moved by love appreciates salvation. He who has had most forgiven loves most. The returned prodigal had much forgiven, and it is reasonable to suppose that he loved much.

The elder brother's desire was not salvation,

but justice—in spite of his misconduct; and love seems to have had no place in his heart. If he had rightly appreciated his own spirit and his own lack, he might have said as to himself when he had finished with his list of claimed good qualities and deeds, “Yet if, in addition to all this, I even ‘have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing’” (1 Cor. 13: 2, 3). Do we always realize the true worth and indispensableness of salvation and of love? Let us see to it that the elder brother’s unloveliness is not ours also.

## XII

### NOT A DUTY TO WORK OUT ONE'S SALVATION

If there is one passage in the Bible that is commonly, and perhaps generally, misunderstood and perverted, and supposed to teach the very opposite of what it means, that passage is in Paul's letter to the Philippians, where he says, as he is going away from the believers whom he loves, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2: 12). The common idea as to this text is that it means that the sinner has a share in the work of securing his own salvation. As a matter of fact, it means nothing of the sort.

Salvation is Christ's work. It is not a work that is partly Christ's and partly the sinner's. He who begins a good work will doubtless finish it. This we are to believe, and this we are to teach. Our share in our salvation is not to our credit, but to the added credit of our Saviour. A New England boy, who was brought before the church authorities as an applicant for admission, had the right idea as to this, although he expressed it quaintly.

"Why do you want to join the church?" asked the pastor.

"Because I want to show that I am a saved sinner."

"Do you feel that you are saved?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who saved you?"

"It was the work of Jesus Christ and of myself."

"Of yourself? What was your share in the work of your salvation?"

"I resisted, and Jesus Christ did the rest."

That boy understood the case better than one who thinks that he has a part of his own salvation to accomplish by personal endeavor.

Perhaps the term "work out" is, in a measure, responsible for the popular misconception of Paul's counsel to the Philippians. In New England, and possibly in other parts of the United States, "work out" has a technical, or a popular, signification. Highways are built and kept in repair by the public for the public. Every citizen, especially every property-holder, has to pay his share of the road-tax in his vicinity. His amount of tax is assessed by the selectmen, or the supervisors, as they are called. This includes his share, to be paid in cash, or to be "worked out" by personal labor. A large

majority of citizens in New England "work out" their share of the highway tax instead of paying it in cash. In consequence of this the term to "work out" is understood in New England to mean doing one's share in the payment of government taxes.

But Christ's salvation is not wrought for sinners on the plan of New England road-making. He came into the world to save sinners, not to help sinners save themselves or work out their own salvation.

If, however, the injunction to work out one's own salvation with fear and trembling does not mean that there is any part of one's salvation to be worked out, or to be wrought by one's self, what does the Bible injunction mean? This will be asked by many a reader, and not unnaturally.

The plain answer to this question will be found in the context of the passage in question, if one will but read it attentively.

Paul is writing, not to outside, or unsaved, sinners in Philippi, but to disciples of Christ who are saved by him, and who are sharers of his life. He is not telling unsaved sinners how to be saved, but he is telling saved sinners what to do with their salvation, and how to make it tell for their Saviour's glory, and in the dis-

charge of their obvious duty toward him and toward those whom he loves.

“Have this mind in you,” Paul says, “which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2: 5). And he reminds them what were the mind and spirit of Christ which he commends to them as an example. Paul is going away, and he wants the Philippian disciples to bear faithful witness to Christ, in the absence from them of their loving human teacher. “So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2: 12, 13).

It has been suggested that the word “outwork” would give an idea of the meaning of Paul’s injunction “work out.” You have obtained salvation wholly from God, now let it appear; “outwork your salvation,” so that others may see what it is. Again, it is as though Paul had said, “manifest your salvation;” “evidence your salvation;” “bring up your salvation from below the surface, so that it may be seen and felt by those who see you, and feel you, and know you and your joy and your faith.”

Paul's counsel to the Philippian believers is counsel also for us and for all. It is not a suggestion that Christ is unable to compass more than a part of the sinner's salvation. It is a suggestion that, Christ having wrought our full salvation, and having wrought it without our aid, we certainly owe it to him and to others whom he has saved, or whom he is ready to save, to work out from ourselves the salvation that we rejoice in, and which Christ is ever glad to give to others fully and freely.

### XIII

#### SANCTIFICATION, NOT "SANCTIFICATION"

"Sanctification" is a Bible word, and again it is a theological word. It has two different meanings in these two spheres. Each meaning is distinct and well defined, and important by itself; but the one meaning ought not to be confounded with the other, as too commonly it is. Trouble comes from supposing that the word means the same thing in both cases.

According to the Bible, "sanctification" is the being devoted to a sacred use or purpose; the being set apart to a holy service; the being consecrated to God or to God's cause. According to common theological teachings or terminology, "sanctification" is a process by which one makes attainment in godliness, and advances toward purity of life and being; or, again, it is a state or attainment as a result of processes and progress. In the one case, "sanctification" is the immediate act of an individual for himself, or it is the immediate result of the act of another in or for him. In the other case, "sanctification" is not compassed all at once, at the beginning, by the action of one's self or



of another, but it is a movement toward a desired state, or the final state itself, not to be reached except by continued processes with resultant progress.

In Bible usage, he who sets himself apart to God's service, or whom God sets apart to himself, is a sanctified man. He is the Lord's now, and he has a call to count himself wholly the Lord's sanctified one. His sanctification is in the act or fact of his setting himself apart, or of his being set apart. His progress as a sanctified man is his progress from the point of his being definitely sanctified. Whatever gain comes to him in God's service is his gain as an already sanctified man, not his gain toward fuller sanctification. But in theological parlance, sanctification, or "progressive sanctification," is a gradual process by which one who is not yet wholly sanctified makes attainment toward that state. In the one case, sanctification is counted the true beginning of right Christian service; and, in the other case, it is an end in, or a desired result of, such service.

God's repeated commands to his special servants, or his deputed representatives, were to sanctify others to his service by formal acts of consecration and cleansing. "Sanctify unto me all the first-born," he said to Moses in Egypt

(Exod. 13: 2). "Jehovah said unto Moses, at Sinai, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments, and be ready against the third day" (Exod. 19: 10, 11). "And Moses went down from the mount unto the people and sanctified the people; and they washed their garments" (Exod. 19: 14). When Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priesthood, God's command to Moses was, "Anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office" (Exod. 28: 41). "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (Lev. 8: 30). Joshua's command from God was, "Up, sanctify the people" (Josh. 7: 13). God said to Joel: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the assembly" (Joel 2: 15, 16). And so again and again in the Bible record.

Frequently the people of God were commanded to sanctify themselves. "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy" (Lev. 20: 7), said the Lord to Moses concerning the Israel-

ites. "Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow" (Num. 11: 18), was God's command in the wilderness. At the Jordan, Joshua's word was, "Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Josh. 3: 5). Samuel said to the elders of Bethlehem, "Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice" (1 Sam. 16: 5). David commanded the priests and Levites at Jerusalem: "Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel. . . . So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel" (1 Chron. 15: 12, 14). This idea is often repeated in the Old Testament story.

Things, as well as persons, were sanctified by a specific dedication, or a formal act, according to the Old Testament text. The seventh day was sanctified, or made holy, as a rest day to the Lord, from the creation. The same Hebrew word means both "made holy" and "sanctified," and is thus interchangeably translated. (Gen. 2: 3; Deut. 5: 12; Neh. 13: 22, etc., revised text.) Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19: 23); the tabernacle, its altar, its vessels, and its instruments (Exod. 29: 43, 44; 40: 11; Num. 7: 1); the offerings (Exod. 29: 27); the temple (2

Chron. 29: 5); a city gate (Neh. 3: 1); houses, fields (Lev. 27: 14-22), and other possessions, were thus consecrated, sanctified, dedicated, or renewedly fitted for God's acceptance.

Even God himself speaks of being sanctified, and is spoken of by others as thus being held sacred. The Lord "was sanctified," or "showed himself holy" at "the waters of Meribah" in Kadesh-barnea (Num. 20: 13; Deut. 32: 51). He said to his people by the prophet Ezekiel, "I will be sanctified in you in the sight of the nations" (Ezek. 20: 41); and again, "I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations" (Ezek. 36: 23). And thus over and over again.

There is no room for question as to the meaning of "sanctifying" in the Old Testament. Not a single passage in that portion of the Bible suggests the idea of a gradual and progressive work. In every instance it has reference to an immediate purposeful dedication, a deliberate setting apart, a formal devoting to God, of one's self or of another or of a particular thing. It corresponds with the idea of counting holy. It is not consistent with the thought of a mere entering upon a process of growth in grace and godliness. And as it is in the Old Testament, so it is in the New.

The Greek word *hagiazō* ("to sanctify," or, "to set apart") corresponds with the Hebrew *qadesh* ("to count holy," "to devote," "to sanctify"). The Septuagint recognizes this in all its translations. Our English version, especially in its revision, is conformed to this idea. Jesus suggests that it is "the altar that sanctifieth the gift" (Matt. 23: 19). A gift laid on the altar is thereby devoted, or made holy. Paul declares that if an unbelieving husband is married to a believing wife, "the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife," so that their children can be counted "holy" (1 Cor. 7: 14). If the wife be devoted to God, her husband and children are counted as included in the dedication. Again, Paul suggests that meats not ceremonially clean may be eaten by a believer: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5).

The writer of Hebrews says emphatically, "Both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2: 11). That is, as the context shows, our Saviour, having been himself in subjection while in the flesh,

was devoted to God, and now he counts those also who devote themselves to God as one with himself. This idea is in accordance with the prayer of Jesus for his disciples on the night of his betrayal: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17: 17-19). Jesus, while in the flesh, is sanctified or consecrated in the service of his Father, and he wants his disciples to be thus sanctified or devoted within the limits, or according to the teachings of, the truth as found in God's Word. Again, the writer of Hebrews speaks of that "sanctification [or, holiness] without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12: 14). Of course, one who refrains from giving, or devoting, himself wholly to God, cannot be accepted of God. Entire surrender and entire consecration are the only terms on which any person can enter or continue in the active service of God.

A passage that has been seized upon by those who think that the Bible counts personal sanctification a gradual and progressive work, or a final attainment as following certain processes, is the prayer of Paul for the Thessalonians: "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be pre-

served entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 23). But the evident thought of Paul is, not that the Thessalonians should be sanctified by piecemeal, one portion at a time, or come finally to a state or attainment, but that they should make thorough work of it from the start, giving to God, as God seeks it, their entire selves, holding nothing back from the consecration.

A Connecticut farmer came to a well-known clergyman, saying that the people in his neighborhood had built a new meeting-house, and that they wanted this clergyman to come and dedicate it. The clergyman, accustomed to participate in dedicatory services where different clergymen took different parts of the service, inquired:

"What part do you want me to take in the dedication?"

The farmer, thinking that this question applied to the part of the building to be included in the dedication, replied:

"Why, the whole thing! Take it all in, from underpinning to steeple."

That man wanted the building to be wholly sanctified as a temple of God, and that all at once. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"



. . . The temple of God is holy, and such are ye" (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17).

Another passage thought by some to indicate the idea of a gradual process in the work of sanctification is Ephesians 5: 25-27, where Paul likens Christ's love for his church to a true husband's love for his wife: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of the water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

But a true husband does not love his wife or take her as his wife by a gradual process. He pledges his love at once and for always at the time he takes her as his wife, and gives himself as her husband. Jesus Christ gave himself up for his church in one offering, to sanctify or consecrate or hallow that church. He wants that church to be wholly clean, holy, and without blemish. His act of sanctifying his church by his blood was a complete act in its first performance. The individual members of that wholly sanctified church ought to grow in grace toward perfect holiness.



It can be affirmed positively that there is not a single text in the New Testament, any more than in the Old, which justifies the claim that "sanctification," as the word is employed in the Bible, applies to a gradual purifying and uplifting of the inner being. It always refers to an immediate and formal act of consecration or devotion, complete from the beginning. Thus far as to the Bible term "sanctification," or "to sanctify."

As to the theological term "sanctification,"—that term refers to a process that is clearly recognized in the Bible, under the term "growth in grace." Growth in grace is the duty and privilege of the Christian believer. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3: 18), says the Apostle. And again, "Grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4: 15). And so at many another point in the Bible teachings. He who is wholly sanctified has a duty to grow in grace continually.

The only trouble is that the word "sanctification," in all its variant forms in the Bible, means one thing, while the word "sanctification" as used in theological discussions, and in popular speech about the Christian life, means quite another thing. Each English word has its own

meaning, and represents a Bible truth, if only the word be recognized as a different word from the other; but when the one word is taken as meaning the same as the other, there is endless confusion in consequence.

During war time the writer heard an illiterate and warm-hearted colored preacher at New Berne, North Carolina, preach from the text "Lo, I come." He began his sermon thus:

"D'ye har dat, bredren? 'Low I come,' not 'High I come.' De Lord Jesus comes to de poor and de lowly."

That was good gospel, but poor exegesis. The idea was all right, but the preacher had the wrong word to base it on. It is much the same with any one who supposes that the Bible word "sanctification" teaches the Bible truth of growth in grace and godliness.

## XIV

### PURITY OF HEART NOT A STATE OF SINLESSNESS

One of the beatitudes that is least understood, and that as it stands seems most difficult of realization, is that which pivots a clear conception of God, or an actual sight of God, on absolute purity of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5: 8). If that means that only those who are sinless, stainless, morally pure—free from moral imperfection, not merely in act and in word, but in very thought and desire—can see or perceive God, then indeed it shuts out every human being from the possibility of such an attainment. Yet the place of this beatitude in the teachings of our Lord forbids the supposition that in its utterance, to those who were listeners to his teachings on the Mount, he was deliberately closing the doors to all against the longed-for perception of God. Hence it follows that these words cannot mean what their bald literalness in our English translation would seem to indicate; and that we would do well to ascertain what they do mean.

Three words in that beatitude liable to be misunderstood, and so to be misleading to the ordinary English reader, are "heart," "pure" and "see." Each one of these words is worth considering by itself, as a help to the understanding of the beatitude in its entirety.

The word "heart" is now used as a synonym of the feelings or emotions or affections, as over against the "head" or "brain" as a synonym of the mind or intellect. We speak of a man of good impulses, but of bad judgment as one "whose heart is right, but whose head is wrong." But the ancients had another mode of anatomical symbolism. They located the mind in the heart, and the affections in the stomach or bowels. In both the Old Testament and the New the term "heart" usually corresponds with our term "mind," and the term "belly," or "bowels," with our term "affections." "Heart" in those days, like "mind" at the present time, could include the idea of the whole man; as a man who has set his heart to a work, or who is whole-minded to that work. The same Hebrew word is, indeed, frequently translated in our English Bible both "mind" and "heart." Again the Greek word rendered "mind" in the New Testament refers rather to the purpose and will than to the intellect and understanding.

But in the nicer distinctions of these anatomical figures of speech of the ancients the "heart" of then stood for the "mind" of now, and the "bowels" of then for the "heart" of now. In the "heart," or the mind, man thinketh, before his thought takes representative shape in action. With the "heart," or the mind, man believeth, before his mouth makes confession of his belief. He is swayed by "bowels" or feelings of mercy or of compassion, and out of his "belly" (or, as we would say, heart) there go forth streams of love in feelings of affection for those who are in need. This is the way in which the Bible uses the term "heart;" therefore in the beatitudes, as elsewhere, "heart" means, according to our way of speaking, mind, or purpose, and not heart.

The word "pure," as ordinarily used, in Hebrew, in Greek, and in English, means "without alloy," "clean," "clear," "simple," "single." It is applied, in the Bible, to virgin gold, to a clean table or candlestick, to flawless glass, to unmixed oil, and to water that is only water. It does not necessarily involve a moral element. It never stands for absolute sinlessness of being. Hence it is to be taken, in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as elsewhere, when connected with "heart," or "mind," as meaning "single,"

“simple,” “unmixed.” The “pure in heart” are those whose minds, or very selves, are single, simple, undivided and unalloyed in one aim and purpose.

In Bible usage, as in our ordinary modes of speech, to “see” is not merely to have in the field of natural vision, but is to discern, or perceive, or recognize, or apprehend. To say “I see” is a familiar and intelligible form of expression by the blind, when a thought or a truth is made clear through the mind’s eye. We see a great many things that we do not see. We can see much that we cannot see. “No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1: 18); yet it is the privilege and the duty of every child of God to walk as Moses walked, “as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb. 11: 27).

In the light of Bible usage, therefore, the words of this beatitude might be rendered: “Blessed are the single-minded, or single-purposed: for they shall perceive God.” Blessed are those whose whole being is intent on seeing him who is invisible; blessed are those who look toward God all the time, and who will not be diverted from that looking; blessed are those who live to see God:—for they shall see him. Thus rendered, this beatitude is consistent with all the teachings of our Lord and of his

apostles, as well as with all the great truths in the kingdoms of nature and of grace. It is in this very Sermon on the Mount that our Lord says to his disciples: "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single [simple, clear, unblurred], thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6: 22); and in immediate connection with this declaration, as if in application of its truth, he says: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other" (Matt. 6: 24). The eye that would see the right master must be single, clear, pure; for no man can see the master whom he ought to serve if he is looking, or trying to look, in two directions. Such a servant is described by the apostle James as "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1: 8).

Single-mindedness, or simple-mindedness, is a characteristic of childhood. A child is all attentive to one thing at a time, looking at that one thing with single eye and simpleness of mind; while double-mindedness, or divided thinking, is the peril of the full-grown person. How many things a keen-eyed child will see in an everyday walk that are unnoticed by the father whom he accompanies! The father has too many things

in his mind, or on his mind, to observe that which, for the moment, is the all in all to the single-eyed and simple-minded—or, as the Bible would call it, the pure-hearted—child. Therefore it is that our Lord said to his maturer disciples: “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein” (Luke 18: 17). The pure in heart are the child-minded. They shall see God, because when they are looking for him they are not looking for anything else. Their eyes are single, their minds are undivided, and their whole being goes out toward the object of their search. They seek for God, and they find him when they search for him with all their mind.

He who has his mind, or purpose, his thoughts, his desires, his whole being, clarified and unalloyed, fixed and centered on God, longing to perceive him, to be in communion with him, to be a partaker of his spirit and his life, shall find him, and shall know that he is one with him. He is one of the pure in heart, of the single-eyed and the simple-minded, who shall perceive God clearly, and in consequence be blessed or happy continually.



## XV

### BIBLE PERFECTION NOT SINLESSNESS

Over against the promised blessing to the "pure in heart" there stands the command of Jesus to his disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48); or, as it reads in the Revised text, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." As this is popularly understood, and frequently preached about, it is a command to sinlessness, or to moral faultlessness, a command to be free from spot or stain or taint of evil, to be like God in holiness and purity; and many of the disciples of Jesus say of this requirement, as others said of his call to oneness with himself by partaking of his flesh and his blood, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6: 60.)

Others, again, console themselves with the belief that, as Jesus would not command the impossible, they can be sinless to the extent required in this injunction; and therefore they strive to that end, and, indeed, think they attain to it. Thus the differences of opinion as to the meaning of this command lead many, on the

one hand, to hopeless striving after moral perfectness, and to doubt or despair in view of their obvious failure; and lead many, on the other hand, to self-deception and a wrong estimate of their moral conduct and spiritual condition. Both these undesirable states of mind are a result of a too common misunderstanding of the plain meaning of the term "perfect," as it stands in that command of Jesus.

The word "perfect," or "perfection," or "perfectly," as found in our English Bible, never means a mere state of sinlessness. It has, indeed, no exclusive reference to moral qualities or to a moral condition. Its meaning is rather a state of completeness, of wholeness, of entirety. Several Hebrew and several Greek words are thus translated, but all of them have practically the same root idea. The command to the Israelites to have "a perfect and just weight," and "a perfect and just measure" (Deut. 25: 15), had reference only to the material substance of the weight and measure. The host of David's soldiers who came with him to Hebron "with a perfect heart" (1 Chron. 12: 38) were not sinless men, but "whole-hearted" retainers of the new ruler. When it was said of Tyre, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou

wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee" (Ezek. 28: 15), it is clear that symmetry and entirety are included in the idea of perfectness, rather than sinlessness or moral purity. So all the way along the Old Testament record.

When Jesus said to the rich young man who wanted to know how to make sure of eternal life, "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Matt. 19: 21), he clearly meant, "if thou wouldest complete thy work of preparation, if thou wouldest be thorough in this thing." And when James says that the man who can control his tongue "is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also" (James 3: 2), he evidently uses the word "perfect" as meaning "thorough," "entire," "complete." Thus in the New Testament as in the Old.

An examination of the context of the command to "be perfect," in the "Sermon on the Mount," will show to any careful reader that it is impartiality, or freedom from the imperfectness of a one-sided view of truth or duty, rather than sinlessness, that is enjoined by Jesus. He is speaking of the common way of loving your friends and hating your enemies.

"Ye have heard that it was said," he says,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5: 43-48).

It is one-sidedness that is warned against. It is impartiality or entirety that is enjoined. It is wholeness of vision, instead of a squint of the eye, that is commended. Gentiles and publicans and other sinners may be good to those whom they like, and be unloving toward others; but the disciples of Jesus are to be loving toward all, as the Father of all is loving toward all. This is the plain command of Jesus in the words, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” He says practically: “Be impartial, as your heavenly Father is impartial. Avoid one-sidedness. Let your love and fairness take in the entire sweep of the circle.”

There are many Bible calls to holiness, to godliness, to purity of thought, but that idea is not found in this Bible word "perfect." The supposing that the command to preach perfection, or to press toward it, is a command to a sinless life, is a mistake that has caused no little confusion and misunderstanding in the minds of simple-hearted believers. The conventional term "perfection," and the Bible term "perfection," are two terms of very different meaning.

## XVI

### DENYING SELF, NOT DENYING THINGS TO SELF

To deny one's self is a fundamental Christian duty. To deny anything to one's self may be a duty or it may not be; it may be right or it may be wrong: all depends on the circumstances and nature of such denial, and the object of its exercise. Yet both denying self and denying to self are popularly spoken of as "self-denial;" and under this term both the biblical and the unbiblical ideas of denying self are generally included. An all-essential duty in Christian discipleship is thus commonly confounded with a matter of conditional expediency.

"If any man would come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24; Mark 8: 34; Luke 9: 23). Here Jesus makes the duty of denying self an essential requisite of Christian discipleship. A man cannot be a follower of Jesus unless he denies himself, or, as the Greek term indicates, denies himself utterly. The requirement is not the denial of anything,

either little or much, to self, but the utter denial of self—a very important, and too often unrecognized difference.

As the term stands in the Greek, the injunction of our Lord to his every disciple, to “deny himself,” includes the idea of turning one’s self away from one’s self, of rejecting self as the desire of self. It suggests the thought of two centers—self and Christ—the one to be denied and the other to be accepted, as an object of attraction and devotedness. Its use in the original seems to say: “If you would turn toward me, you must turn away from yourself. If you would accept me as the chief object of desire, you must renounce yourself as such an object. If you would henceforward live in my service, you must at once cease to live for your own pleasure and interest.”

It does not directly enjoin the suppression of self, or the overcoming of self, or the constant battling with self; but it calls to the turning away from self, the ceasing to live for self, the practical ignoring or forgetting of self as a center of interest and as an object of desire. That is the injunction, in its meaning and in its application. Self-denial is self-ignoring in hearty self-surrender.

It is a very common mistake concerning the

nature of self-denial, to suppose that it involves a constant thought of self, in order to the entire subjection of self. As a matter of fact, he who lives the truest life of self-denial has very little trouble with himself; being absorbed in an object of interest outside of himself, he forgets himself; living for something worthier of his devotion, he does not give any worrying thought to that self from which he has turned away in his enthusiastic pursuit of a nobler aim. A soldier is worth little as a soldier until he forgets himself in his interest in his soldier duties. If he even thinks of prolonging or protecting his life he is more likely to lose his life than if he is absorbed in the effort to do his work manfully as a soldier. An unselfish interest in our fellows causes us to forget ourselves in our loving thought of others. An unselfish interest in our Friend of friends takes us away from ourselves, and fills our mind with a simple purpose of pleasing and serving him. A life of self-denial is not a life of conflict with self; it is rather a life turned away from self in utter self-forgetfulness.

Self-mortification and self-flagellations and self-inflictions or self-deprivations are often mistakenly supposed to be elements of self-denial, when in truth they are only modes of self-nursing or self-seeking. A man who de-



sires to win a prize in an athletic contest will gladly put himself in training in order to be in the best physical condition for that struggle. He will deny to himself anything in the line of food and drink and luxurious indulgences that might lessen his prospects of personal victory. But in all this there is no true self-denial; on the contrary, it is confessedly a method of persistent self-advancement. A prize-fighting bully, who lives abstemiously while in training for his contest can hardly be called a man who denies self, and who lives for a nobler object than self-aggrandizement. Professional bank robbers and burglars are known to be carefully abstemious in their personal habits, and to deny themselves the use of liquor or tobacco while in the active practise of their "profession;" but who would think of claiming that such men were living lives of true self-denial, in denying to themselves those indulgences which would hinder them in their selfish pursuings?

He who lives for the acquisition of wealth, or for the attainment of knowledge, or for the securing of honor and fame, is ready to deny to himself food, or sleep, or personal ease, if thereby he can promote the chief object of his life struggle. But whatever else he denies to himself, a worker of this sort does not deny him-

self to himself. Self is the final center of his living and being.

If, indeed, a man strives always for the promotion of his highest spiritual welfare, and for the completest subjection of himself, his self-deprivations and his self-mortifications may be nothing more than carefully chosen modes of self-improvement, having in them none of the qualities or merit of true self-denial. He may fast and pray and live a life of retirement and deprivation in order to save his spirit or self. There is no denial of self in that. It is all selfish living. Such a man is living for self. He is seeking to save himself. He lacks the first requisite of a Christian disciple. He who turneth not away from self, refusing even to make the eternal saving of himself the chief object of living, cannot be a disciple of Jesus.

A life of true self-denial, or of denial of self, may be a life of comparative ease and fulness, while a life of endurance and privation may be wholly a life of self-seeking. He whose nature and tastes would prompt him to a life of activity and adventure, may find himself called of God to settle down quietly in loving ministry to one of Christ's dear ones in need of tender care, but whose surroundings are those of relative luxury. Only by the denial of self can such a man

find pleasure in the acceptance of a lot exempt from toil and hardship. On the other hand a man of social instincts may travel to the end of the earth in loneliness and may deprive himself sorely as he travels, because he wants, for some reason, to hide himself from all who know him, or because he is seeking reputation or reward in a discovery which he hopes to make. There is no denial of self in his deprivations and endurances, as there is in the other man's settling down in a home of luxury at the call of God, contrary to his personal inclinations. Not what a man has, not what he yields, but the aim of his life—toward self or away from self—settles the question whether he exercises true self-denial as the Bible teaches that duty.

He who would deny himself at the call of Christ must turn away from himself in hearty rejection and utter forgetfulness of himself as an object of life. Not what seems to be for his own interest or pleasure, but what his Master directs for him, must occupy his thoughts, and claim his best endeavors, at all times. It may be that his Lord will call him to labors abundantly, and to prisons more abundantly; to stripes and stonings; to journeyings often; to perils of rivers; to perils of robbers; to perils in the city; to perils in the wilderness; to perils

in the sea; to perils among false brethren; to travails and watchings; to hunger and thirst and fastings; to cold and nakedness. It may be that that same Lord will call him to dwell in his own hired house in the world's chiefest city, with friends at hand in Cæsar's palace.

If, indeed, his self-denial be complete, it will matter little to him whether he be in the one state or in the other, provided only he be where He for whom he lives would have him. With all his heart he can say, in either case: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 11-13).

True self-denial is the denial of self as an object of service or of interest, through a surrender of self to One who alone is worthy of supreme interest and devoted service. It does not depend on, or consist of, either fulness or lack; but it accepts the one or the other of these conditions gladly, according as the Master for whom self has been renounced may ordain and indicate.

## XVII

### BEARING THE CROSS, NOT BEARING CROSSES

“Bearing the cross,” or “taking up one’s cross,” has a well defined meaning in the Bible. It was, at the beginning of the Christian era, an expression with a technical signification, commonly understood in the days of the New Testament writers.

“Cross-bearing” is not, in that precise form, a Bible term; but it is now popularly employed as the equivalent of the phrase “bearing the cross,” although with a very different meaning attached to it. The diverse meanings connected with the supposed equivalent terms is a cause of serious misleading in Bible reading, and in religious conversation and thought.

“Cross-bearing” is ordinarily considered the bearing of burdens, or the enduring of trials, in Christ’s service, or for Christ’s sake. “Taking up the cross,” or “bearing the cross,” as the phrase is employed in the New Testament text, or as it was understood at the opening of our Christian era, was the surrender or devotion of one’s life to Christ’s service. This distinction is

an important one as throwing light on the command of Jesus, and on the duty of his every disciple.

The "cross," or, more literally, the "stake," was the instrument of execution for criminals, as that word was employed in classic and in Jewish literature. It being customary for a condemned criminal, on his way to the place of execution, to carry upon his shoulder the stake to which he was to be fastened, or by which he was to be transfixed, the term "taking up the cross," or "bearing the cross," came to be equivalent to our modern term "halter-wearing" or "going to the gallows." He who bore a cross on his shoulder was recognized as one who was appointed to die, and he must stand or move with that grim fact staring him in the face.

When Jesus had been sentenced to death, "he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place . . . where they crucified him." (John 19: 17, 18). Finding that his strength was insufficient for the heavy burden, his murderers compelled one Simon, of Cyrene, to bear the cross for Jesus. (Matt. 27: 32; Mark 15: 21; Luke 23: 26.) This was a natural way under such circumstances. The victim himself, or some one who was reckoned with him, bore the cross, or the stake, on his shoulder, to the place

of execution. He who thus bore the cross was seen to be on his way to give up his life, or he was accounted as a sharer with the condemned one.

When Jesus found his disciples expectant of honors in his service as the Messiah, and longing for places nearest him when he should be uplifted in his kingdom, he told them that they little knew what they were asking. His first uplifting was to be on a cross. Would they be willing to share that experience with him? "Ye know not what ye ask," he said. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" (Matt. 20: 22; Mark 10: 38). It costs something, he suggested, to be my follower. A man who enlists in my service must do so with a halter around his neck. If he cares more for his life than for me, he is unfitted to be one of my disciples. "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not [in comparison with me] his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 26, 27).

Whoever would follow me must be ready to give up his life for my sake, and he must walk after me, bearing his cross on his shoulder, as I



bear mine, to the place of crucifixion. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." As showing that this had reference to giving up life for him and his cause, he added: "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it" (Mark 8: 35; Luke 9: 23, 24).

In every instance in which our Lord spoke of taking up the cross, or of bearing the cross as a test of discipleship, he used the term in this sense of voluntary life-surrender. The disciple of Christ must put his life at the disposal of Christ; he must do as Christ would have him do, rather than as he might personally prefer to do. He must live and move and be as one whose life is no longer at his own disposal. This must be his new thought with each new day, and it must control his every act and word and purpose. Not the suffering that might accompany crucifixion, but the surrender of life even to crucifixion for Christ's sake, was signified and symbolized in bearing the cross, as our Lord enjoined it upon those who would be disciples.

Just here is where the conventional meaning of the term "cross-bearing" differs so widely



from its biblical meaning. A "cross" is no longer understood to be a stake, a gibbet, or a gallows; but it includes anything that crosses, or thwarts, or vexes, or tries, us, in our daily life-path; hence the bearing of a cross is now supposed to be the bearing or enduring of trials and sufferings, petty or great, for Christ's sake.

Alexander Cruden, who has perhaps done as much to shape popular theology by the definitions in his *Concordance* as Milton has to shape popular eschatology by his descriptions in *Paradise Lost*, says that "pains, afflictions, troubles and unprosperous affairs, were called crosses" in classic days; but no classical authorities seem to justify this claim of Cruden. In the *Century Dictionary*, with its claim to give the consensus of opinion as to the meaning of familiar words, we are told that "to bear a cross" is "to endure with patience a discomfort or trial;" and this is a fair rendering of the modern popular meaning of "cross-bearing." We are, moreover, told, in the same *Century Dictionary*, not only that the term "cross" means "any suffering voluntarily borne in Christ's name and for Christ's sake," but that this was our Lord's use of the word when he said, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." And here is a fresh illustration

of the truth that dictionary-makers are as liable as other men to misread Bible texts, in the light of popular errors of opinion as to the teachings of those texts.

There is, of course, no such thing as "little crosses" in one's daily life course, although one often hears such things spoken of. If a cross is a cross at all it is big enough to hang on, to die on. If it is not large enough for that, it is not a cross in the Bible sense, or in the classical sense, of that term.

It is true that cross-bearing, as a synonym of voluntary life-surrender, includes whatever of suffering, or of trial-enduring, or of personal privation, may come to one as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; but it is not true that the essential thing in cross-bearing is suffering, or trial enduring, or personal privation, for Christ's sake. Cross-bearing is the signifying of one's readiness to live or to die, or to live and to die, in Christ's service, with or without suffering—as the duty of the hour may require.

When the members of the Continental Congress decided to sign the Declaration of Independence, they realized that they were thereby putting a halter around their necks. As one of their own number then said, "Now, we must all hang together, or we shall hang separately."

Unless they were ready to die, if need be, in defense of the stand they then took, they were not worthy to sign that Declaration. It might, indeed, be their lot to endure much suffering as a consequence of that act of theirs; but whether they suffered or not personally, they signified their readiness to accept the full consequences of their action, even to the extent of surrender of their lives—thus devoted to the cause of American independence.

As Dr. Bushnell suggested, of a later crisis in American affairs, the practical issue between the two sides in our Civil War was in the question, who could furnish the most dead; yet no one would claim that the mere suffering or dying of a soldier on the right side of that contest was in itself such a proof of his fidelity as he had given when he enlisted for the war, with his life pledged to the prosecution of that contest to its end. So it is in Christian cross-bearing; it is the devotion of the life to Christ's service, rather than any suffering or trial that ensues from such devotion, which makes and marks the Christian disciple as a Christian disciple.

In the modern popular understanding of the duty of cross-bearing, discomfort or trial or suffering for Christ's sake is the all-essential feature of service; but in the New Testament presenta-

tion of this duty, the all-essential thing is the voluntary surrender of one's life to Christ's service—suffering or no suffering. In the one case, the suffering is looked at as essential; in the other case, the suffering is recognized as merely incidental. As men ordinarily see it, he is the truest cross-bearer who has most trials to endure, and who endures them faithfully for his Master. As the Bible presents it, he is the truest cross-bearer who most heartily puts himself at the service of Christ, for joy or for sorrow, for want or for fulness, for life or for death. Cross-bearing is not hard asceticism; it is cheerful and unquestioning devotedness. It is not living for the purpose of denying oneself; it is living for Christ, even though one must deny himself in order to such living.

It is such cross-bearing as this that prepares the way for crown-wearing. He who would save his life by penances and unnecessary privations shall lose it. But he who would surrender his life for Christ's sake shall find it in a joyous here and hereafter, in the presence and service of Christ.

## XVIII

### SACRIFICE AS A MEANS OF PERSONAL ENJOYMENT

Among the Bible words that have been deflected from their primitive meaning is the word "sacrifice." The English word is from the two Latin words sacer, "sacred," and facio, "to make." It means a sacred offering, a consecrated gift to God. Both the Hebrew and the Greek word generally translated in the Bible "sacrifice" means "to slaughter," or to pour out the blood, or the life, of a victim, as a holy offering. Yet there is another Hebrew word translated "sacrifice" which means simply an "offering," bloody or unbloody, including prayer. Strictly speaking, therefore, any gift to God, even the gift of prayer or praise or love, is a sacrifice. But such an offering may be given cheerfully or grudgingly, and we are so accustomed to give to God grudgingly that we have an idea that there must be something of that nature, of a grudgingly given gift, in every sacrifice.

Our ordinary idea of a sacrifice is, that it is a painful giving up of that which we prize and delight in, and which we would like to retain. We

understand that we can sacrifice our life, our health, our ease, our comfort, our worldly means, our reputation, our position in life, and that it may be our duty to do so. But we do not think of sacrifice as in itself a pleasant act, as one that is to us more enjoyable than anything else could be. We do not count a delightful hour, or day, in the society of a friend, the giving of a birthday or a Christmas gift to the one we hold dearest, the singing a song of rejoicing when we have been made happy by another, the sharing our abundant or surplus means with a worthy one in need, as a sacrifice. But the latter may be as truly a sacrifice as the former. Sacrifice does not depend on the cost which it involves, but on the spirit which prompts it.

Whether a sacrifice is made unto God or to a fellow-being, it has its chief value in being counted a sacred or a holy offering. Any offering deemed sacred or holy ought, of course, to be rendered heartily and with gladness, be it God-ward or man-ward, since that which is a duty ought to be performed cheerfully and with joyfulness. The more joyous its giving, the more truly is it an acceptable gift. "God loveth a cheerful [literally a hilarious] giver" (2 Cor. 9: 7), and man, also, loveth a cheerful giver. Yet there are offerings in the line of duty that

furnish us conscious enjoyment, while there are others that are consciously made by us at a painful cost. Both are sacrifices, but the difference is in the different spirit in which they are given. Not what the gifts are as an offering, but what we are as their offerers, makes the one painful and the other pleasurable.

A main cause of our confusion of mind as to the true meaning of sacrifice is that we make self our center, instead of making God and God's dear ones our center. We want to have that which will please ourselves, rather than that which will please God, or God's dear ones. When we find communion with another pleasurable to ourselves, we do not count it a trial to give up our time. When we have sincere love for another, we have delight in giving to that object of our love. Communing with God, and giving to God, would be also pleasurable if we were controlled by love for him.

Sacrifices to God, as called for in the ancient law of Israel, were intended to show love for God. We are apt to think of the cost of those sacrifices, instead of thinking of the spirit shown in their making. We forget that love was and is the fulfilment of law, and that the pouring out of the life of beasts sacrificed according to the law was not merely in order to destroy that life, but



it was in order to render it up as a loving gift to God. It was the love prompting the offering, not the intrinsic value of the offering itself, that made the sacrifice acceptable to God. As it was toward God in the sacrifices of old, so is it toward our fellows in the sacrifices we are now called to make day by day.

“A true sacrifice to God,” says St. Augustine, “is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme end in which alone we can be truly blessed.” It ought not to be a painful duty to us to do that which evidences our highest love, and which best promotes our personal welfare. That is the kind of sacrifice that God wants from us, and that is the kind of sacrifice that we ought to delight in making. But this is not the way we ordinarily look at sacrifice.

Self-denial, for example, is always hard; but self-sacrifice may be hard, or it may be easy. Self-denial inevitably involves a battle with self. Self-sacrifice does not necessarily call for a struggle. It may, indeed, be pleasant to devote or surrender one's self, one's powers, one's possessions, one's interests, to another's sway, or to a cause which seems worthy of one's devotedness. But it is a sad illustration of the perversion, if not of the degradation, of the human intellect and



character, that self-sacrifice, self-devotedness which is sacred and holy, has so commonly come to be counted a necessarily painful and undesirable outlay of self at the call of dry duty. "I suppose I must sacrifice myself," is the way one is likely to speak when he feels that this is his duty. He would hardly deem it a proper way of speaking to say, "I am called to the most delightful service imaginable. I am going to sacrifice myself for the cause I love best," or, "to the person dearest to me."

The common way is as though a man were to say explicitly: "For me to be devoted to another in love, or in friendship; for me to be devoted to my country, to the welfare of my fellow-beings, or even to my God,—is contrary to all my instincts and impulses and conscious desires. I do not want to be devoted to any one or to anything outside of my immediate personal self. In order to any sacred devotedness I must subject myself to a constant denial of the real longings of my lower and of my stronger self."

Even if this had to be recognized as the true—and, as human nature is, as the inevitable—state of the case, its simple recognition would tend to aid one in struggling against the disclosure and continued existence of such a pitiable condition of affairs. But, thanks be to God, it is not true

that self-sacrifice always involves conscious self-denial, or always necessitates an obvious struggle with self. Self-sacrifice is, in one form or another, the truest joy of every true man or true woman; and, the truer one is in real manhood or in real womanhood, the more potent is the sway of self-sacrifice in his or her life-course, and the less prominent in that sphere is the struggle in the direction of self-denial.

To love devotedly, and to deem one's loving a sacred devotedness, is to be self-sacrificing in love, but it is not necessarily to be consciously self-denying in one's love, even though at times it may be so. A young mother, for example, is self-sacrificing in her love for her child. In the exhibit of her self-sacrificing love, she may have to deny herself sleep which her tired physical nature craves. The specific self-denial, in this instance, costs her a struggle; but the controlling self-sacrifice, of which the self-denial is an incident, does not. The one is not easy; the other is. The one is not in itself a delight; the other is a real joy. And as the mother's self-sacrificing devotedness gains in power by its exercise,—as all good is sure to gain,—the sense of self-denial, or even the need of self-denial as such, is less and less, the very self of the devoted one coming into subjection to, or into conformity with,

the spirit and purpose of the self-sacrificing—the self-surrendered—devotion in love.

The young patriot who is swayed by a self-sacrificing devotion to his country in its peril, may have to deny himself daily while in the course of his training as a soldier; but because of the all-swaying power of his hearty and joyous self-sacrifice, as a patriotic soldier, he hardly thinks of the incidental self-denial involved in its exhibit. And by and by the sorrowful self-denial on his part is practically at an end, being overwhelmed by, and swallowed up in, his glad-some self-sacrifice. So, again, is it with the young student, in training for a part in an inter-collegiate boat-race or football game. Any self-denial in the course of his training is of minor importance, in his mind, in comparison with his self-sacrifice, or with his self-devotedness, in behalf of the college of which he is a joyous representative.

Whenever, in fact, an all-absorbing devotedness has control of a man's affections and purposes, his consequent self-sacrifice in that direction practically precludes the idea of self-denial in the same direction. Self is forgotten, in love for that which is dearer than self. The busy man who finds not a minute to spare from his pressing office duties, and who would deem it

an act of self-denial to give audience to any ordinary special visitor, springs with delight from his seat at the entrance of one whom he loves devotedly in a self-sacrificing friendship. There is no thought of self-denial in the glad surrender of his time in such an instance; his self-surrender is but a joyous self-sacrifice. So is it with one who makes glad gifts to a loved one in proof of his self-sacrificing devotedness to the recipient. So, moreover, it is with every self-forgetful devotee everywhere and always.

As it is man-ward, so it is God-ward. There is practically no conscious self-denial in intelligent right-minded and all-controlling self-sacrifice toward God. Loving God as we ought to love him,—as we shall love him if we give him due thought in his relation to ourselves,—we can only joy in the privilege of showing our love for him in every way possible; and then the more we can do for him, or endure for him, the more we shall have of joy in the exhibit of our prevailing self-sacrifice toward him.

Just here it is that the Jews of old were constantly making the mistake which is so common among Christians to-day. God had shown to them that they might evidence their self-devotedness to him by bringing their offerings as sacrifices to his sanctuary. They fell into the error

of looking upon these proofs of their devotedness as having a value because of their intrinsic worth. They practically lost sight of the essential difference between self-denial and self-sacrifice. Therefore it was that the Lord, by his prophets, repeatedly reminded them of the true import of all sacrifices, and of the folly of looking at them in any other light. "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? . . . I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations. . . . Cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1: 11-17.)

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in Jehovah." (Psalm 4: 5.)

And it was in this view of the truth that the inspired Psalmist could say in all earnestness,

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalm 51: 17.)

"And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me;

"And I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;

"I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Jehovah." (Psalm 27: 6.)

Thanksgiving to God is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. Praise is sacrifice. Jesus Christ had joy in sacrificing himself for us. Our greatest enjoyment ought to be found in continual self-sacrifice to God, and in Christ-like self-sacrifices for those whom God loves, and hence whom we ought to love.

## XIX

### LOVE NOT A MATTER OF FEELING

There are few words in the English language of so great importance, or which are so vague in meaning to the average person, as the word "love." "God is love," and "love is of God." Love is the very nature of God, and love is the highest attribute and the foremost duty of man. Love is the fulfilling of the law, Godward and manward. Love is the greatest thing in the world, and the holiest. Yet on the other hand, "love" is used as a synonym of lust, and of unholy desire, and of sinful craving; and men are warned against the misleading of love, with its manifold dangers to the soul. What is this "love," with so much of good in it, and of evil? What does the word itself mean, and how comes it that it represents both that which is right, and that which is wrong; that which is to be sought, and that which is to be shunned?

A popular idea of "love" is that it is a matter of feeling or of emotion; that it is not within the control of the will, but rather that it is a result of attraction or of fancy, regardless of reason or of purpose. Yet the Bible repeatedly com-

mands love as a duty, and again it warns against love as a temptation; therefore, it is not to be supposed that love, either in its good sense or its bad, is merely a matter of feeling.

The truth is, there is "love," and there is "love." Both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, there are several words, of different shades of meaning, which are alike translated "love;" and this is a prime cause of the ambiguity of the English word which is taken to represent them all. The root idea of the Hebrew word which stands for divine love, and for the holiest love of which man is capable, is that of "giving," of "outgiving;" it applies to an unselfish attitude of being, rather than to an emotion, or feeling, of the soul. The idea of another Hebrew word, also translated "love," is that of lust, or of selfish indulgence. These two words, of diametrically opposite meanings, are translated by a single word in our English tongue; and it is much the same with the Greek as with the Hebrew. What wonder that the average English reader is confused in finding "love" used in one connection in the sense of an unselfish outgiving of devotion, and in another connection in the sense of selfish craving or of sinful desire!

Our English word "love" is represented in the Sanskrit, with the original meaning of "covet-



ousness," or of "selfish longing." Another Sanskrit word for "love" stands for our word "friendship," with the central thought of a generous outgiving of self. Hence there is "love" that is love, and there is "love" that is not love. There is love that represents an attitude of being which is approved of God and of man; and there is love that represents a mere state of feeling which is not meritorious or gainful. The love which God bears to man is not a matter of feeling, but an attitude of being; and it is such love that God commands and commends in men.

The central idea of "loving," in its best sense, is that of "holding dear." That which we count precious, and are willing to give ourselves to, or to give to of our time and means, we may be said to love, apart from any question of our emotions or feelings. A man who really loves his country, holds his country dear, and is willing to risk, or to lay down, his life for it. But he may have no thrills of feeling as he thinks of his country; and he may be unable to convince himself that his patriotism is all-prevailing by any process of analyzing his emotions. So of one who loves his parents, or his wife, or his children, sacredly. The proof of his love is in what he is willing to do for them, and to be toward them, and not in how he feels about them. Thus, also, in a man's

love to God, and in a man's love to those whom God loves,—it is in holding God dear, and in holding dear God's dear ones, that the power of true love is evidenced; the feelings have very little to do with the matter.

Even where love is strongest, the feelings may work against the will, and the will may have to exert itself in behalf of the love as against the emotions. A soldier's feelings may prompt him to run from danger, when duty calls him to meet it bravely. His love for his country at such a time is shown in the exercise of his will against his feelings. A husband or a father is many a time called to show love by doing, or by being, as true love prompts, when his feelings incline him to show a very different state. So in every testing hour, as to man's love to God. The question is, What is he ready to do, or to be, in proof of his holding God dear? not, How does he feel about it all just now?

“Loving” and “liking” are often used as if they merely indicated different degrees of affection. To “like,” the dictionary tells us, is “to be pleased with in a moderate degree;” while to “love” is “to delight in,” or to have a “devoted attachment.” “I like him, but I do not love him,” says one; thereby meaning that the interest felt in him is a very slight interest. “No

one who knows him can merely like him; they must love him," says another, who would thus indicate that the feeling inspired by him must always be of the superlative degree. This understanding of the two words relatively is very well as far as it goes; but neither word has only a single meaning. Each word means one thing at one time, and another thing at another time; and unless we recognize the fact of these differing significations of the two words severally, we lose the power of using them or of noting their use discriminatingly.

"Liking" is sometimes employed as expressive of a feeling of personal satisfaction with a thing; in contrast with "loving" as expressive of a feeling of unselfish affection for it; the one representing the subjective, and the other the objective, phase of its enjoyment. Thus we may be said to love nature, and to like the fruits that nature brings to us. It is this view of the case that is taken by the poet Wordsworth, when he illustrates to a child a difference between loving and liking:

"Say not you *love* a roasted fowl,  
But you may love a screaming owl.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing  
A love for things that have no feeling:

The spring's first rose by you espied,  
 May fill your breast with joyful pride;  
 And you may love the strawberry-flower,  
 And love the strawberry in its bower;  
 But when the fruit so often praised  
 For beauty, to your lip is raised,  
 Say not you love the delicate treat,  
 But like it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

You love your father and your mother,  
 Your grown-up and your baby brother;  
 You love your sister and your friends,  
 And countless blessings which God sends:  
 And while those right affections play,  
 You *live* each moment of your day;  
 They lead you on to full content,  
 And likings fresh and innocent,  
 That store the mind, the memory feed,  
 And prompt to many a gentle deed.  
 But *likings* come and pass away;  
 'Tis *love* that remains till our latest day:  
 Our heavenly guide is holy love,  
 And will be our bliss with saints above."

This distinction also is a fitting one; but it does not exhaust or limit the meanings of the two words severally. "Liking" has a force in contrast with "loving" that goes deeper and out-reaches farther than would be indicated by these suggestions.

To "like" is often used as expressive of satisfaction with another, or with another's ways; as

growing out of a similarity of recognized ideals. "I like to see a man as thoughtful of others as he is;" "I like his high sense of honor;" "I like his reverent spirit;" "I like such sensitiveness and delicacy as he shows;" "I like him, because of his unselfish devotion to his mother;"—such expressions as these indicate a great deal more than a selfish pleasure in the conduct of the one criticised. They have even greater force than would have the phrase "I love him dearly." "Liking" another, in this sense, is approving the standard of the one liked; and so far it is a step beyond loving him.

We can even love another without liking him; and we can be loved while we are not liked. A wife can love a worthless or an unloving husband, when she cannot like him. A mother can dearly love a reprobate and ungrateful son, whom it is impossible for her to like. To love is to hold dear. To like is to approve and commend. Loving does not always carry liking with it, any more than liking always carries loving. We can approve and commend and like one toward whom we have no feelings of love; and we may even be better liked by those who do not love us than by those who do.

It is pleasant to be loved. It is good to be liked. Best of all is it to be both loved and liked.

We can be loved by those whose judgments condemn us. We shall be liked by those whose judgments approve our ideals, and whose discernment recognizes our steady struggling toward those ideals. If the choice must be made by us, it were better to deserve to be liked by the wise and good, than to win love apart from the question of our deserts. If, however, we deserve to be liked, we are not likely to live and die unloved in the world.

It has been said that we ought so to live that God will not only love, but like us. This is another way of saying that our lives ought to be so conformed to God's image in Christ, that our likeness to him will have his recognition and approval and liking. God loves us even now, because of what he is. If we are like-minded with his Son, God will so far like us for what we are.

In reading Bible commands to love, or Bible warnings against love, we ought to bear in mind the two kinds of love, and know that we should love, in the sense of holding dear, what God holds dear; and that we are not to give way to a craving desire for aught that God disapproves. In reading Bible references to liking, or to becoming liked, we are to know that we have no right to like, or to be like, what God cannot like. The

more we love as God loves, the more we shall be like God in our loving and in our likings.

## WHOM DOES GOD LOVE ?

A prominent Sunday-school worker, who was accustomed, in former years, to visit Sunday-schools, and to address the little ones there, sometimes startled the little folks in the primary department, and even their teachers, by his unlooked-for questions and statements.

"What kind of children does God love?" he would ask.

"Good children," "Good children," would come back the answer from the confident little ones in every part of the room.

"Doesn't God love any children but good children?" the visitor would ask.

"No, sir," would be the hearty response.

Then the visitor would startle or shock the little ones, and sometimes their teacher, by saying plainly and deliberately:

"I think that God loves bad children very dearly."

At this, some of the surprised little ones would draw up their mouths, and perhaps exclaim "Oh!" Others would simply stare in bewilderment. Perhaps the teacher would have a look of wonder or regret, and wait for the next dis-



closure of ignorance or error on the speaker's part.

"Did I say that God loved to have little children bad?" was the visitor's next question.

"No, sir;" "No, sir," would come back from some of the startled little ones in a tone of relief.

"No, I didn't say that God loves to have children bad. God loves to have children good. He wants them to be very good,—as good as they can be. But when they are bad children God still loves them. God is very loving, and he keeps on loving little ones who don't even love him at all."

That would be a new idea to many of those little ones. And there is nothing that a child is quicker to catch, or gladder to receive, than a bright, new idea at any time. The average child would take in the thought suggested quicker and more willingly than the average teacher. Then that visitor would make the thought plainer to the pupils by an illustration.

"Does your mother love you?" he would ask.

Almost every child would promptly answer, "Yes, sir," to that question.

"Were you ever a bad child?" was the next home thrust.

"Yes, sir," would come back faintly from some.

"Did your mother stop loving you then? Did

you have to feel that there was no loving mother to go back to, because you were a bad child ? ”

The child heart recoiled from that thought, knowing the mother heart too well to admit it. Then was the time to press the precious truth that God loves bad children more than the lovingest father or the lovingest mother in the world loves a child ; that, even when the father and mother forsake a needy child, the Lord will take up that child tenderly. That Sunday-school worker found, in his wide field of observation, how common and how deep seated is the idea that a child's acceptance with God is rather because of the child's lovableness than because of God's lovingness. Nor is this fearful error to be found merely, or chiefly, among primary-class pupils and their teachers.

In Mr. Moody's authorized Life, by his son, W. R. Moody, this incident is mentioned, which shows the existence of the error where it would have been least looked for. Henry Moorehouse of Great Britain had preached in Mr. Moody's mission during his temporary absence from the city. This was in 1866, or a little later. Mr. Moody tells of his asking Mrs. Moody about Mr. Moorehouse, when he returned to Chicago. She said, as if she had heard a new truth proclaimed in that pulpit :

“ Well, he tells the worst sinners that God loves them.”

“ Then,” said I, “ he is wrong.”

“ I think you will agree with him when you hear him,” said she, “ because he backs up everything he says with the Bible.”

Mr. Moody soon came to believe that what he had deemed an error of Henry Moorehouse's was the truth of God in Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners,—not of saints, but of sinners. Because Mr. Moody came to this conviction, thousands of sinners, who heard him declare it, came to Jesus Christ to be saved.

The Christian Church is by too many looked at as an exhibition place, where Christians are shown off as Christians, instead of as a hospital where the spiritually halt and maimed and deaf and blind and leprous are treated for their sickness and failings. This keeps out of the church a great many who belong there, and would gladly be under treatment there, if only they realized its mission for them. The church also has in its membership many who have come there with a wrong idea of what they proclaim and disclose by their church-membership.

The writer heard that a former neighbor of his had, when past the middle of life, connected himself with the church. Meeting the

neighbor, he expressed his gratification at the step he had taken. This was the response that came back in a self-satisfied tone:

“Well, I thought it over a good while. I know I have my faults, but I’m better than the average, and so I thought I’d join the church.”

It was not easy, in the days of Jesus, for those who thought themselves better than the average to see how it was possible for Jesus to show a loving interest in sinners while they were yet sinners. But Jesus could see it. It was sinners whom he loved, and whom he came to save. This truth, pupils and teachers, sinners and those who think themselves better than ordinary sinners, have yet to realize more fully than most of them do.

## XXI

### ARE CHILDREN BORN CONDEMNED OR REDEEMED?

“As in Adam, all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15: 22). Simple and intelligible as this statement of the apostle to the heathen people seems to be, it has been a cause of much difference and discussion among Bible students and theologians for centuries. It is by many held to be a sweeping and general statement, not to be taken literally, but by one means or another to be conformed to more exact denominational tenets. By others it is accepted as indicating, in its fulness, the abounding love of God for the human race. In view of its importance and of the wide differences of opinion as to its general meaning, the truth as to this statement is always worthy of consideration.

It was in love—which God is—that as the crowning act of creation God formed man in his own image, as the head and representative of the human race, giving him high privileges, and enjoining upon him obedience to specific law as the cost of preserved life. Adam, knowing the cost, deliberately and wilfully sinned and incurred the

“wages of sin.” In that sin of Adam the race of man, of which he was the head, came under condemnation. But God’s love never failed or wavered. While the first pair, the twain-one, were yet alone in the condemned race, God in his love gave promise and assurance of redemption; and when the first child was born to that condemned and redeemed head of the race, it was born into a redeemed race.

But a redeemed race was not a saved race. A child redeemed by a Christ promised, or by a present Christ, was not a child saved from the power of sinning and of receiving the wages of sin. The first child, Cain, whom Eve rejoiced over as the possible Christ, proved to be the first murderer. Cain, and every child born since then, was relieved from the penalty of Adam’s sin, but like Adam was put on trial for himself and must choose whether he would obey and trust or would prefer sin and its disclosed wages. This is the sweeping truth as to the race condemned in Adam and redeemed in Christ. No child is condemned for his father’s sin; but every child is liable to sin for himself when he comes to the age of intelligent choice. Thus it has been from the beginning in all lands, and everywhere, and thus it is to-day, as God sees and knows the inner being of each and of all.

Of course, there are sad consequences of former transgressions which increase the weakness and temptability to sin of the children of sinning parents, but all that is not wilful or deliberate transgression, nor does it merit condemnation. God, who knows and judges the real person, understands as to all that. On the other hand, there are privileges and blessings in Christ to those who know Christ in his fulness, and who trust him in his love and his promises beyond those who never knew him and who never trusted him. Parents may, if they will, include their children with themselves in their faith, and may trust God as fully for their children as for themselves. This is the truth as I have come to realize it, and to rejoice in it, and as I now desire to press it upon others.

#### MY FORMER VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT

In 1868, by special request, I read an essay on "Childhood Conversion" before the Massachusetts State Convention of Sunday-school teachers at Woburn. That essay was published as a booklet, and in that form it had quite a circulation beyond the number of its original hearers. But later Bible scholarship has rendered some of its phraseology obsolete. Moreover, my own experiences with my children, and in the

fuller enjoyment of faith in our blessed Saviour for ourselves and for our children, have broadened and deepened my convictions of the relation of children to Christ and of Christ to children. Hence I desire to restate the truths treated in that essay, so as to present them in fuller accord with the light of God's teachings.

Our revised Bible Text shows that the command to "be converted" was an erroneous translation, which misled our fathers, and caused them to mislead their children. In place of the command to be converted or to be born again, the true text tells us and ours to "turn," as a positive active duty, instead of waiting passively for a work to be wrought upon us which only God can compass. Turning trustfully is our duty, whenever we are on the wrong track, or are swerving from the right course. God, who watches us lovingly, will supply whatever help or power is needful.

Even at the time when I read the essay the phraseology of which was affected by the old Bible translation, I had already learned as a believer to trust my Saviour for my children from the beginning as I trusted him for myself as a sinner. A little incident in connection with the reading of the essay made that clear as to my personal belief. As I took my seat on the plat-



form, after reading the essay, a hearer in the body of the house called out:

“Will the speaker inform us how young a child can be Christ’s own?”

“It is not for me to fix the day or the hour,” I said. “But for my own conviction I can say that my youngest child is not yet twelve hours old; and I have no doubt that he has been Christ’s a considerable time.”

A child had been born to me in Hartford about eleven o’clock the night before; and I had taken the midnight train for Boston just after that. It was after this remark that a prominent Baptist pastor of Boston came to me and said:

“You take the right view of the case, Brother Trumbull. I heard a good Baptist doctor of divinity say years ago, ‘John the Baptist preached Christ while still in the womb.’” (See Luke 1: 15, 41, 44.) I thought of that remark when later I heard Dr. Horace Bushnell say in an interdenominational meeting of clergymen, in his peculiar phrase:

“I don’t know what right we’ve got to say that a child can’t be born again before he’s born the first time.”

Of course even the duty to “be converted,” as understood, or as misunderstood by our fathers, was not the same as being “born again.”

But the two terms were often confused. Conversion is now seen to be the simple act of turning toward God. Regeneration, or the second birth, is wholly the work of God. A child of man has no more to do with it than he had with his first birth. For the first birth the human father is responsible; for the second birth the Divine Father is responsible. It is not for the child to feel that he has a personal duty in the matter in either instance. It is for him to recognize his personal duty as growing out of his human father's, or of his Divine Father's, act. Heaven and earth, God and child, seemed different to me when I realized this great truth.

#### LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT FROM THE BIBLE

In consequence of my early training on the subject, I was long in doubt as to the personal relation of children to Christ before they are old enough to make an intelligent choice of him as their Saviour. I heard it so many times said in the pulpit or prayer-meeting, and I so often read it in religious papers and books, that children are born as lost souls, that I actually came to believe that there was some truth in that horrible dogma. Even after my marriage and the birth of my first two children I had not been wholly released from this unreasonable and unbiblical

error. The attempts to evade the sweep of this sentence of death, by theories which would include more or less of the young as exceptions to the general rule, did not give me any real hope. It was obviously too unreasonable and too shadowy to satisfy me. Hence I sat in the dark while I longed for the light.

Various phases of the idea of regeneration of an unintelligent child by a formal rite of circumcision or of baptism did not help the case. Passages of Scripture cited and misused in support of this wrong view did not, to my mind, meet the case. I could only pity those who found help through such errors; but for years I sought vainly anything more satisfactory or convincing.

My first real light on the subject of God's loving plans for children and of his thoughts of them when he was purposing to repair the wrong wrought for them by our first father, Adam, came through the suggestion to me of the meaning of inspired words in Malachi. The persons who pointed me to this passage were the Rev. Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon and the Rev. Dr. William W. Patton, both of whom had been personally helped through seeing the light from this passage after suffering in the darkness under the shadow of the old popular dogma.

Malachi (2: 15), speaking of the covenant union by which husband and wife are made one, says: "And did he not make one? . . . . And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed." The very purpose of God in marriage among his dear ones is the increase of "godly seed"; not as children who start life as lost, or condemned, children who when they grow up may be won to Christ as heathen are won through missionaries, but are from the first a "godly seed," godly children of covenant parents. The recognition of this truth put the unity of the family in a new light to me; and also the position and privilege of the children of believing parents in God's sight and plan. Malachi is the last writer of the prophets before the coming of Jesus. He it is who tells of the coming of John the Baptist, who "shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." (Mal. 4: 6.)

Then as I recognized this glad truth, I was met with the claim that in consequence of the sin of the first Adam, all children—even of believing parents—are born condemned, and must be lost sinners unless they individually turn from death to life, from Satan to the Saviour. At this I longed to believe that as much for good was wrought to the race by the Second Adam

as had been wrought for evil by the first Adam. I had been brought up to believe that Christ was more, not less, than Adam in both his work and his influence. If I had been mistaken as to this I must learn Bible truth all over again. Then I newly turned to the Bible for light on this subject. I saw that the Scriptures left no doubt on this point. The pervasive, cleansing power of Christ for good was every way greater than that of evil wrought to the race by Adam. In consequence of this, "where sin abounded [through Adam] grace [through Christ] did abound more exceedingly." (Rom. 5:20.) This gave me new light and love in my better understanding of the work and grace of Christ.

From this new starting-point I studied the Scriptures with added profit and gratitude, finding them fully consistent with the, to me, freshly-disclosed truth, in preference to the old error, by whomsoever taught or held. It proved to me that there is a new covenant of grace, bringing light and life to such as me and mine. And now I am confident that through God's love in Jesus Christ every child of Adam's descendants comes into being as free from guilt and its condemnation as Adam was created. Of course there are all the added tendencies toward sin, and all the physical and mental weaknesses which

grow out of wrong habits indulged by successive generations of human parents; but spiritually every human child starts as free and with as much ground for hope as Adam started. Until, therefore, a child has deliberately and wilfully chosen to sin he is not a sinner, and does not stand under condemnation.

As to this precious truth, I am now, and I long have been, as confident as of the truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour. How much more God's love seems to me since God's word disclosed to me this truth! And how much more is the recognized work of Christ, and how much vaster is the scope of his redemption, than when limited and perverted by the pernicious errors of human illogical and unscriptural dogmas under which I was brought up—or kept down!

A favorite perversion of Scripture by those who deny or belittle Christ's redemption of Adam's condemned posterity is an ejaculation of the Psalmist in one of the penitential psalms:

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity:

And in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psa. 51: 5.)

This psalm is supposed to have been written by David when he had been personally guilty of yielding to lust, and of committing adultery and murder, and of showing himself faithless and

treacherous to a trustful and devoted follower. The expression is a common Oriental one, as indicative of self-abasement, in view of inexcusable personal transgression. One who has been notoriously guilty of unparalleled treachery will confess that he is of a family that for generations could never be trusted. In this he means to intensify his confession of being different from all his fellows. It is evident that whatever else the psalmist intended to say, he did not mean to assert that his neighbors were all of a like sinning stock with himself. It is suggestive of a strange tendency of the human mind to ignore Bible teachings, and common sense, while seeking to uphold at any cost a doctrine that one's fathers believed, but which will not stand the light of truth. The frequency with which this personal penitential psalm is cited in digests of doctrine as if it supported the theory that all children belong to a race which Christ did not redeem, shows how difficult it is to find a Bible passage that even seems to suggest such an idea. Whatever else is taught in the Bible as to the present condition of Adam's posterity, a passage that does *not* teach or suggest the condemnation of the race is Psalm 51: 5,

“Behold *I* was born in iniquity,  
And in sin did my mother conceive me.”



It is strange that one who believes that doctrine should consent to cite that ejaculation which tends to throw discredit on the theory.

The real truth stands out in the pages of the Old Testament and of the New for the cheer of those who would know what God would teach us concerning his love and plans for the youngest children. The "Evangelical Prophet" says as to this (Isa. 28: 9), speaking, by inspiration, of God's messenger to men, "Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast?" There does not seem to be much doubt about very young children being included there. Isaiah did not appear to want them to wait even until they could recite the catechism before they were to be counted God's children.

When Jesus, to whose coming Isaiah had looked forward, came to earth, he made the matter yet more clear. His disciples thought that very young children were less hopeful objects of grace than were their fathers, and they would have pushed back parents who came to Jesus with children in their arms to seek his blessing. But "when Jesus saw it [the action of his disciples] he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come



unto me; forbid them not; for to such belongeth the kingdom of God." (Mark 10: 14.) Yet these were little children. It does not appear that they had themselves given any sign of a changed nature or purpose; but their parents brought them in love and faith. And Jesus welcomed them just as they were. He did not say they might when they grew up become worthy of God's recognition or forgiveness. He said unqualifiedly of such as they: "For to such belongeth [even now just as they are] the kingdom of God."

Such words as Jesus then spoke would now be rebuked by many a theological professor, or ordained minister. They do seem very broad views, fearlessly expressed; but to those who want to know what Jesus thinks on the subject there his words stand. And all his teachings are in the same line. At one time the disciples of Jesus came and asked him about standards of worth in God's kingdom, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And he called to him a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye [the chosen disciples] turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18: 1-4.) Jesus did not say that when a child became as fit

a subject of grace as a clergyman or a theological professor there was reasonable ground of hope for him. But Jesus did say that unless choice ministers and theological teachers of his time turned and became as the little child—a veritable flesh and blood little child—there was no hope for them.

On the day of Pentecost, when the long-promised outpouring of God's Spirit came, as foretold by the prophet Joel, Peter, leader of the Apostles, and led by the Holy Spirit, declared specifically to the great multitude gathered under the new dispensation, "To you is the promise, and to your children" (Acts 2: 39). And all the Bible teachings from that day on were in the same line. God be praised, the "Second Adam" did as much of good for every child of man before his birth as the first Adam did of evil! How unworthy would it be of our conception of Christ if we could not believe this!

Paul urges Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6: 4). He does not urge them to win them from condemnation to redemption, but to bring them up in Christ, wherein they already are.

The inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows how all the promises to Abraham

and his seed are more than made good in Christ to all who are Abraham's seed in faith. As sharers in the parents' flesh and blood by nature, the children can be sharers with the parents in the realm of grace in Christ. Unhesitatingly confident in this truth the believing parent can bring his children to God, nothing doubting, saying in faith, as he prays with them and for them, saying, "I will put my trust in Him; and again, Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me." (Heb. 2: 13.) God never refused to accept such a parent or such a child. We can be as sure of that as that God is God.

CORRECT VIEWS BY MANY OF  
GOD'S CHILDREN

It is true that many have been so misled by erroneous man-made dogmas and human systems of doctrine that they hesitate to accept the truth as taught in God's word, and as in accordance with our knowledge of God's love and God's power. But there are many, very many, who accept the truth as God declares it, and as we are justified in receiving it. All who accept the truth as declared in the Bible, and as disclosed in human experience and observation, are ready to admit that when Adam of his own choice and act cut himself off from God, he and his belong

to a lost and outcast race. Before the first human child was born, however, redemption by a Saviour was promised, and from that hour every child who has been born into the world has been born into a redeemed race.

Of course every child has had the privilege—if it be deemed a privilege—of being lost by his deliberate choice of evil; but his being lost is in consequence of his own choice, and not of his parents', or his ancestors' choice or sins. This seems too obviously in accord with Bible teachings and sound reason to admit of serious discussion, and many of the wise and good have recognized the truth. Happily this is no question on which denominational differences make a separation. Whatever the verbal basis of belief in this may be, God-led individuals accept the truth, without being misled by verbal mis-teachings.

Infant baptism is not involved in this belief. Baptism is a human rite. In itself it does not shape the heart or thought of the subject, either young or older. Some believe that baptism is always to accompany the confession or expression of one's personal faith. Others believe that baptism of a child is to accompany or indicate the dedication of the child to God with the hope on the parent's part that the child will later

choose for himself the right. Yet others think that baptism belongs only to those who already are the loved and accepted children of God. With these differences of view the right of baptism and its administering are not directly involved in the question of the present relation of the child to Christ, and of Christ to the child. The latter is vastly more than differences of opinion as to the right of baptism, and the persons who are to receive the rite.

It was a prominent Baptist pastor in Boston, who, as referred to above, told me that I was correct in counting my son of a few hours old already Christ's, and who quoted another Baptist doctor of divinity as saying that John the Baptist preached Christ while he was yet in the womb. Yet neither of those Baptist divines would have deemed either child spoken of as a fit subject for baptism.

An eminent Baptist clergyman, widely known as a college president, as a theological professor, and as an author, said to the writer that he should never dare to be a father, or to bring a child into the world, until he was confident that he had a right to trust his Saviour for his child as well as for himself. He could say confidently to his Saviour, "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me."

I know a number of earnest Baptist pastors who have what they call a dedication service, in the churches of their charge. In this service, little children, infants, are brought by their parents, and in the presence of the church and congregation are publicly dedicated to God and to his service. And there are Baptist preachers and people who approve of, or who have a part in, such a service, because they count children as loved and redeemed by God in Christ. So it is evident that Baptists believe this truth.

When I first came by independent Bible study to this view of children as born into a race redeemed by Christ, I thought it was a novelty, and I feared I should be deemed a heretic. But when I was with a number of Methodist clergymen, including several who afterward became bishops, the most prominent of those said that this view was what was held by them, as the gracious condition of childhood, and by many of their soundest theologians. While not all Methodists held to every dogma that their theology or their standards justified, any more than all Presbyterians accept every point included in their articles of faith, all Methodists have a right to believe that children are born into a state of grace, redeemed by Christ. And many, very many, rejoice in that belief as to their own chil-

dren, whom they train from the beginning for Christ.

Methodists are authorized to believe that Jesus Christ secured to the race of man a start as redeemed from the curse which came through Adam's sin. This their standards show. Yet the attempt to employ human words as covering spiritual conditions, and to reduce to human logic the bounds of the boundless, infinite and eternal, lead many of them, as those of other denominations are led, into confusion or inconsistencies or doubts. In the official Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church it is specifically affirmed: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God;" Binney's, "Theological Compend Improved," a standard work in the denomination, asserts without qualification: "The guilt of original sin is covered by the atonement and is not imputed to any of the offspring of Adam until its remedy is willfully rejected."

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<sup>1</sup> But in all these standard works there are statements not easily shown consistent with the truth of the character of the atonement and the full work of the Second Adam as the Redeemer. The work of Dr. Wiley, of Drew Theological Seminary, on "Atonement in Christ," in speaking of the salvation of infants through Christ, says, "The question is not with-



Dr. Bushnell's view of childhood in a race redeemed by Christ, and to be trained for God from the earliest life, is accepted as the correct view of truth by multitudes in the Congregational, and Presbyterian, and Episcopal and other churches. And this view has been steadily making progress in later years. It is a view that no denominational lines confine or exclude. And for this there is cause for gratitude among all.

Dr. Bushnell's earliest statements of this truth had been condemned by many as heretical and were out of print before I became personally interested in the truth as a subject of thought. Hence, I first came to the light without the ad-out its difficulty. . . . We must confess that the usual Arminian treatment of this question is not very satisfactory. It often hesitates, vacillates. There is a native guilt, but not a guilt as of actual sin. . . . This indecision is an attempt to hold Calvinism and Arminianism beyond the point of real divergence, or from a failure to give scientific completeness to the latter." Convinced as I am that no system of man-made doctrine concerning spiritual and infinite truth can be definitely correct I make no attempt to conform my conviction of God's disclosed truth to any one or any more than one denominational system of belief. Yet I will not count in question the great truth that Jesus Christ does more of good to the human race than Adam did or could have done of evil.



vantage of his help in that sphere. Yet I was indeed grateful to find that he was so far in advance on this matter, as in so many others, when God led me out of darkness into light, and his statements confirmed my best views of God's teachings on the subject, where so many had been misled and were misleading others.

WRONG TO CHILDREN WRONGED BY FALSE  
VIEWS OF PARENTS

While there are still many who cling to traditional false views as to the state of childhood in Christ, or to whom such false views cling, it was formerly far worse. It seems strange that even within my own memory there were Bible readers and Bible teachers who could accept such views as were even then held as to the relation of babes to Christ, and of Christ to children. Yet there had been steady gain and growth in the matter for years and for generations. In view of this fact we should have hope and courage when we see in how many things progress against error is yet to be made by Christian believers. Bad as things now are, they used to be much worse.

Even in modern times it has been thought that a child was to be saved, or was to become a child of God, by understanding God's way of salva-

tion, or by understanding some approved system of doctrine. It has taken centuries to bring men to realize that it is Christ who saves, and that salvation is not compassed by intellectual belief. Yet that error was held and pressed by men of God until within two centuries or so. As illustration of the prevalence of the error among those forward in their day, the expressed view of so good a man as Dr. Philip Doddridge may be cited. He was prominent among clergymen more than a century and a half ago who thought of children, taught children, and was supposed to understand the nature and possibilities of children.

In a sermon preached in 1736, Dr. Doddridge said coolly of children, say, five years old: "Without a miracle it cannot be expected that much of the Christian scheme should be understood by these little creatures, in the first dawns of reason, though a few evangelical phrases may be taught [to them] and sometimes by a happy kind may be rightly applied [by them]." Yet Jesus said of the children in arms that, "to such belongeth the kingdom of God," and to such he lovingly gave a blessing. Dr. Doddridge was a successor of the original disciples.

More than a century and a quarter after these words of Dr. Doddridge, I heard yet stronger

and more erroneous words on children spoken by an eminent American divine. He was a clergyman prominent from Philadelphia to Boston. He was addressing an audience of parents and Sunday-school teachers in a Massachusetts city. He explicitly affirmed that it was wrong to teach or encourage a child who had given no evidence of a new birth, and of having been converted, to use the Lord's Prayer. No unconverted, unregenerate child had a right to call God Father. Every child was born under condemnation, and could never be anything else except by a conscious, intelligent change of relation to God. This eminent divine thought it his duty to press that view as truth.

It is a known historical fact that one of the prominent objections to Sunday-schools in the earlier years of that institution was the fear that in them children might be led to believe that they could call God Father, while yet under condemnation as children of Satan. Even in my day I found some parents opposed to having a Sunday-school started in their vicinity because they deemed it better to have a child grow up a conscious enemy of God, obviously needing to be wrested from the devil and brought a new convert to Christ.

No wonder that Dr. Bushnell was grieved as

to the common opinion concerning a child whom many would deem safe if he died in infancy, but not surely Christ's as he grew up. "If he [as child] dies in infancy," says Dr. Bushnell, "God may, it is true, find some way, possibly, to save him; but if he stays among the living [until years of conscious intelligence] he cannot be a Christian till he is older." It was this view of childhood that Dr. Doddridge seemed to have in mind. "The necessity of a great spiritual change is upon him, and yet he is wholly incapable of the change! What other being has the good Lord and Father of the world left in a condition so pitiful as this of a human child?"

It was one of my own dear children, brought up as Christ's from earliest consciousness, who came to me grieved because of appeals to her in Sunday-school to come to Christ, as though she was away from him.

"Father," she said, "my teacher says she wishes I'd come to Jesus. What does she mean? I love Jesus now with all my heart." She was accustomed to commune with him daily as lovingly as with her mother. "How will it be any different with me when I've come to Jesus?"

Yet that Sunday-school teacher simply was as blind as to the truth concerning Christ as many have been since Dr. Doddridge's day, and before.

Would that the days of darkness had already wholly passed away !

Children of Christian parents, even in my day, were not always permitted to pray by themselves as if they had a right to address God as their Father, before they were old enough to make a confession of renewed life in Christ, and as having left Satan and his work. A lovely Christian woman, wife of a clergyman in Connecticut, in whose house I was visiting, told me of her experience in this line. When she was but a child there was a season of special religious interest in the community where she was. While older persons felt the influence of this, she and a little girl friend were desirous of having a share in it. "But our parents told us we were too young to understand it. Accordingly," she said:

"With my little girl friend, I went up into an upper chamber, one afternoon. We shut the door, knowing that if our parents discovered us we should be rebuked for trifling with sacred matters. And there we prayed to God, lovingly and tearfully, and we rejoiced in the privilege. Our parents couldn't understand us, but I believe God did. And now, looking back on that hour," she said, "I believe if ever I have had full communion with God I had it then."

Whose view of children is the more correct ?

Was it Jesus' in his time ? Or was it his disciples' of that day, or in the day of Dr. Doddridge, or in those of later days up to the last half-century ?

Even young children themselves often evidence a better comprehension than their parents of the rights to which they are entitled by their needs and longings and by Christ's love and promises. A little boy in the mission field of Amoy, in China, who desired to be counted in Christ's fold, was told by some successor of those disciples whom Jesus rebuked that he was too small to be counted one of Christ's flock, for he might fall back, and he replied, with better sense than the doubter showed :

“ Jesus has promised to carry the lambs in his bosom. As I am only a little boy, it will be easier for Jesus to carry me.”

Can it be doubted that Christ welcomes such love and trust ? What if all the older ones in the fold evidenced as much ?

In a Christian land a farmer's boy who desired to enter the church fold was told that he was too young. At this, when his father told him on a cold night to fold the farm sheep for the night, the boy brought in the sheep, but left a weak little lamb out in the cold. On being rebuked for this, he said shrewdly :

“ Why, father, I thought the little lamb wasn't

old enough to go into the fold with the old sheep; so I left it outside in the cold until it gets older."

Another little boy, when told he must wait until he was older before being taken in, said, with a touch of wisdom worthy to be considered by older persons:

"You'd better take me in now; for if I'm left outside too long I may not want to come in by and by, when you want me to."

A CHILD-CHRISTIAN NOT ENTITLED TO  
PRIVILEGES OF ADULT BELIEVERS

A child is born as Christ's, and should be counted and trained as such. But a child while a child is not a grown adult. A young child is not necessarily to have the same food or dress or chair or table as a grown person. This is for the child's true welfare; and a child can be enabled to see this, and the reasons for it. Even a lamb, which is entitled to the shelter of the fold, may have a special corner and shelter and food as better suited to its needs than among the sturdier sheep. Thus with human lambs. Milk must be given to babes before they can be fed with meat.

Even the child Jesus could not have the privilege of the earthly temple until he had reached



his twelfth year; yet he was counted as wholly God's child from birth. Any intelligent child can be enabled to understand that he is as truly Christ's as are his parents, while he is not old enough to share all his parents' privileges. To show him the truth is a parent's duty. Yet the Christian parent should count his child as truly Christ's as is the parent. And here is where is the more common and the greater lack.

#### HAVING FAITH FOR CHILD AS FOR SELF

Marriage was ordained of God in order that husband and wife, being made one, might bring children into the world as godly seed, born as God's and to be trained for God. Until a child deliberately deserts God, and chooses to sin, as Adam chose to disobey God, the parent is responsible for the God-given child, to be counted and trained as God's.

Many, very many parents have recognized this duty and privilege, and they and their children have had reason to rejoice in consequence. An illustration of this truth in a godly Scotch mother in Massachusetts impressed me years ago. Her excellent pastor told me the fact while she was still in his parish. Her loved boy, while still in her care, and while she still felt responsible for him, showed evil traits, and seemed inclined to



go astray. But she trusted God for her child as for herself, and she needed and sought God's help in the wayward child's training. And this was her faith-filled prayer for the boy, as she stated it to her pastor:

"Lord, I am thine, and Johnnie's mine, and we are thine; Lord, thy Johnnie's going astray. Bring him back, Lord; bring him back, Lord. If Johnnie's lost, in the Great Day his blood will I require at thine hand."

Such sturdy faith and holy boldness in a trusting parent God loves to find. And God will heed and honor the spirit by which it is prompted.

Training is well in child-care, but faith is better. Earnest prayer, even with the wisest training, is no substitute for firm faith, nor can it be a sure means of keeping the child in the right way. The lack of such confident faith is a lack by which the child may suffer, as, on the other hand, such faith may be a great blessing to the child. This truth is illustrated by a conversation on the subject which I had with a valued friend in New Jersey. He was the son of an eminent clergyman. By his marriage he was in close family relation with several clergymen of prominence. His home was a choice Christian home, in which was the first little child, still very young. As I was passing a night there, we talked together of

this great truth. He spoke of his hope that his child might become Christ's loved one.

"You hope that he may *become* Christ's. Don't you think he is already so?" I asked.

"Why, of course I can't think he's already Christ's. He's too young for me to think that about him."

"Who does he belong to just now?" I asked. "As I understand it, there are only two forces and leaders in the universe, each striving to control humanity—God and the Devil. Which do you think just now claims your child?"

"Well, I know that my child was born under sin, as every child is; but I hope and pray that he may be brought to Christ. I pray for that."

"So you do pray for him, even now, while he is a child under condemnation?"

"Of course I pray for him; I pray constantly and earnestly that he may be brought to Christ. I've consecrated him to the Saviour, and I wait and hope."

"But about him, as he was born and as he still is, you do not have firm faith that he is, and is to be, Christ's?"

"Of course I can't be sure of that."

"Then, as I understand it, my dear friend, if you speak out frankly in your prayers, you have

to pray in substance somewhat in this way. Excuse me for the blunt phrasing, for I speak earnestly and in reverence, but as I understand you to state the case, you have to pray this way:

“‘Dear Lord, I have no right to hope that my child, born in sin, is yet your child. But I pray that you’ll keep your eye on him, and when the time comes that he’s old enough to become yours, you’ll take him from the Devil and make him your child; for I don’t want that boy to be lost.’”

“No, that’s not the way I pray now; but how would you have me pray?” said my friend, the young father.

“As you are God’s, and God has given you that child, you have a full and unmistakable right to go to God with his gift, that child, and to say, ‘Here am I and this child whom thou hast given me,’ trusting God for your child as you trust him for yourself. Going in any other way is not consistent with your privilege in Christ.”

With this beginning of conversation on the subject, we talked until far into the night. Then we kneeled together, and that father committed himself and his loved child afresh to God, asking help to be faithful to that little child of God. And from that hour, as he often afterwards said, he had new faith and joy as he sought to honor

God in being faithful to God and to God's dear one. God never fails a parent who thus trusts him.

Many a father has thus trusted God for himself and for his children. Even within my own sphere of observation I have known parents to joy in such trust for their children and their grandchildren without any room for doubt and wavering. If faith holds firm, God, who has promised, never fails the trusting one. But with the best training, faith is necessary to make it effective for good. God, not good training, is our hope for our children.

A troubled Christian mother sent for me in great distress. Her only son had been for a time wayward and dissipated. She had prayed for him earnestly and constantly. After a while he had been brought into the church and had become an active Christian worker. This gave her joy unspeakable. But now he had fallen back again. He had seemingly abandoned his faith, and had become a reprobate. He had left his home, had enlisted in the navy, and had sailed for the Far East. The poor mother was almost broken-hearted and was well-nigh in despair.

I asked that mother if she had less reason to trust God now than before, as she prayed for the boy of her love. She replied that, of course, she

hadn't as much ground for faith now that her son seemed a reprobate as while he was an active Christian worker.

"Is the difference in God, or in your boy?" I asked.

"The difference is in my boy," she said, "and that's what's troubling me."

"On whom did your faith rest, when your boy was doing best?"

"On God, of course."

"And has God changed?"

"Of course not."

"Then why is your faith lessened?"

"Because of my poor boy's failures."

"Then you are looking at your boy as the ground of your faith, instead of at God."

"Do you mean to suggest," said the anxious mother, "that even now, while my poor boy is in his present state, I can look up to God and pray for my boy as trustfully as I prayed for him while he was active in Christian work? Do you mean to suggest that?"

"If your faith rests on God for your God-given boy, you can pray to God for your boy just as confidently now as before for all that he can do for you or your boy. But you must look to God and not at your boy for hope while you pray."

“Then I’ll do that,” said the anxious mother. And she turned again to God in need and in trust.

Two months or so after that, that mother sent for me again. She had received a letter from her son that gladdened her heart. It was from the vessel he was on in the Chinese seas. It was a letter full of penitence and of good purposes, and of hope and trust. It told a touching story.

About the time when the mother turned anew to God, anxiously but in trust, in her New England home—before, of course, he could have had any word from her about it—as he was on the deck one sunny afternoon in those far-off Chinese waters, a call seemed to come to him from God summoning him to turn from his evil courses to his better self, and to God and to his old faith in God.

Overpowered by his feelings, that prodigal son went down into the fore-castle and prostrated himself before God, confessing his sin, and asking for pardon and help to do differently. And then he wrote as a penitent child to his mother, asking her to pray for him, telling of his sorrow and of his new purpose of living a new life by God’s help. That mother gained, in consequence, new reason for having faith in God for her son

as for herself. Would that every parent had learned that lesson as thoroughly as she learned it ! That returning prodigal became again active in Christ's work ; and in that work he was engaged when God called him away from earth with its temptations. Such faith as that mother's for child as well as for self God always enjoins and honors.

When a troubled father came to Jesus with a demon-possessed child and asked earnestly for help, if it were, indeed, possible for Jesus to give help, Jesus suggested that the question was not whether Jesus had power, but whether the father could believe for his child as well as for himself. " All things are possible to him that [thus] believeth." Then that anxious father cried out earnestly, " I believe [for my child and for myself] : help thou mine unbelief." And the needed help was given. (Mark 9: 17-25.) That is God's way with parents who trust him for themselves and for his children.

LEARNING FROM CHILDREN AS WELL AS  
TEACHING THEM

It is the duty of a devoted Christian believer to teach little children in Christ's service. But it is still more positively a believer's duty to learn from little children. Few of us are competent

to be teachers of children, but all of us, even the wisest and most experienced, can learn important lessons from little children. On this point we are assured by the wisest Teacher who ever lived, who understood little children, and who knew what was in man and all that men knew. Jesus set the little children as an example and pattern before his grown-up disciples; not his grown-up disciples as the example and pattern of little children. Jesus, pointing to a veritable flesh and blood child, said to the wisest of his selected and trained disciples, "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18: 3.) "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." (Mark 10: 15.) And this was spoken of children in arms. Not much doubt as to what was pointed to as the pattern, to be learned a lesson from, there. Some of the wisest men of God since that day have learned that lesson over again, and retaught it to others.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, who was one of the profoundest religious thinkers, while he was one of the simplest-hearted and most childlike men of God in modern times, said of this truth, and it is good to remember having heard him say it:



“ The true knowledge of God, as in friendship, is [assumed by many to be] possible to adults, but not to children; whereas, the real fact is, that children are a great deal more capable of it. The boy-child Samuel could hear the call [of God] when Eli could not. Children may not think the gospel experiences as well, but they can have them a great deal more easily. Tell the children how present God is, how loving he is, how close by he is in all good thought, and they will take the sense in a great deal better than the adult soul, that is gone a-doubting so far and speculated his mind half away in the false intellectualities miscalled reason. Ah ! my friends, of these, ‘ of such as these is the kingdom of heaven ;’ so Christ says and we make almost nothing of it.

“ These children can make room for more gospel than we, and take in all most precious thoughts of God more easily. The very highest and most spiritual things are a great deal closer to them than to us. Let us not wonder, and not be offended, if they break out in hosannas on just looking into the face of Jesus, when the great multitude of priests and apostles are dumb along the road, as the ass on which he rides.”

Dr. Charles Wadsworth, of Philadelphia and San Francisco, who was a native of the same town in Litchfield County, in Connecticut, as

Horace Bushnell and Henry Ward Beecher, says with like forcefulness: "The intellectual opinions, or judgments, little children form of high theological mysteries are nearer to the realities, and so truer, than the metaphysical elaborations of the ambitious rabbis of theology.

"For example, I come to one of these men of academic condition, and I ask, 'What is God?' and he answers, 'God is a self-existent, independent, absolute, infinite spirit; without emotions for emotion implies succession; without dwelling-place, for pure spirit has no relations to position; without, indeed, any resemblances or analogies by which we can figure or conceive of him.' Now, this may be all very profound and philosophic, but, alas, not very comforting.

"God is what? An absolute and infinite Spirit! Ah, me! That mysterious and awful word spirit! No marvel that the disciples on Tiberias were troubled, as through the wild night comes a wondrous form walking on the billows, and they thought it was a spirit. And so when I look forth on the immensities of the universe, struggling to behold the invisible and to compass the incomprehensible, and catching glimpses, as it were, of an absolute, infinite spirit, and am told that it is God, then I startle and stand back in the wild night as the mighty seas roar around

me, as from the forthcoming of some awful and incomprehensible phantom.

“But sick of this vain searching to find out God unto perfection, I turn from the school of the rabbis and find me a little child in its unambitious and earnest instincts, and I say again, ‘What is God?’ and the child answers, ‘God is my Heavenly Father.’ And I know better now, for I know as much as I can know now. God the Spirit is my Father in Heaven.”

Dr. J. C. Ryle, of England, who was the first Bishop of Liverpool, says in the same line: “I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious gospel. . . . There are wonderful examples of what a child can attain to even at three years old.”

And Charles H. Spurgeon, the famous London preacher, adds: “In fact, children are capable of understanding some things in early life which we hardly understand afterward. Children have eminently a simplicity of faith. Simplicity is akin to the highest knowledge; indeed, we know not that there is much distinction between the simplicity of a child and the genius of the profoundest mind.”

Who of us, who has had much to do with little children, has not had light thrown on the great-

est truths of revelation and of spiritual knowledge by the keen insight and the simple faith of the little ones ! A learned divine told an acquaintance of mine that when he, as a theologian and a preacher, was puzzled as to the meaning of a Bible passage, and confused with its various renderings by learned commentators, he was accustomed to read that Bible passage over to his little grandchild, and ask her what it meant, or how she understood it. Her direct and faith-filled answer would, in many a case, open up to him the glorious truth, as he had not perceived it before. Was Jesus mistaken about children as the best teachers for his disciples ?

A little boy whom I knew, while he was scarce three years old, was invited into a neighbor's to the mid-day meal. As he sat down with his hosts at their table, he observed that they did not ask a blessing on the meal. When they pressed him to take food, he said quietly, "I always ask a blessing before I eat." Then, seeing that no one seemed ready to perform that office, he said, "I'll do it myself." And bowing his head, he reverently and simply thanked God for the food and asked his blessing on it. He used no set form of words, but as if in full appreciation of the meaning of his act, he spoke as a grateful child to his Father. He thought this no

unusual act, but his host felt the lesson and told his neighbors of the lesson the little child had taught. How often in some such way a little child shall lead those who should be led !

A TRUTH TO BE REMEMBERED

Every child of man, from the first child, whether of heathen or of Christian parents, has been born into a redeemed race through the second Adam, as the race came under condemnation in the first Adam. (Rom. 5: 15; 1 Cor 15: 22, 45.) With the weakness and evil bent of the outer man by inheritance, a child uncared for is likely to sin of himself as Adam sinned. But if trustful redeemed parents include their God-given children with themselves in their prayers and service and their faith, God will never desert or fail either parent or child. And the nexus of such grace is the parent's faith. Therefore, let parents thank God and trust. God will never desert or fail them so long as God is God.

## XXII

### BIBLE REST NOT INACTION

A favorite idea of rest is that of quitting work, and of having nothing to do but to rest. But a better idea of rest is that of having strength and ability to work, and to keep on working without breaking down or having a hard time of it. The popular view of rest from work is very different from the Bible view of rest in work; but these two views of rest are commonly and lamentably confounded.

For example, the invitation of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is frequently quoted as though it read, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28-30). Tired souls and tired bodies are taking comfort in the thought that they have done quite as much work as they ought to, and that it is time for them to have a vacation or an outing. Therefore they sing languidly, but in hope:

"There is rest for the weary,  
There is rest for me."

But while vacations and outings have their place in life, the rest to which Jesus invites hard

workers is not rest from work, but rest in work. "Take my yoke upon you," he says, "and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. 11: 29.) Putting your neck into a yoke is not an outing, but an inning. Pulling away more vigorously at a heavy load is not a vacation, but it is the sort of rest that Jesus summons to in his service.

The more popular idea of this invitation of Jesus is indicated in the familiar words:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast.'"

But the Gospel invitation says nothing about laying down the head on the Saviour's breast; on the contrary, it invites to the putting of the head through the Saviour's yoke. The invitation is not to lazy swinging in a spiritual hammock, or to tired lounging in a spiritual easy-chair, it is to a vigorous tugging under a spiritual yoke-beam; and there is all the difference in the world between these two. If, indeed, there be any invitation in the Gospel pages to these more attractive indulgences it is not found here. Over the very entrance to this house of refreshing

there is inscribed a warning, like that which we see at the doorway of many a busy shop or factory, "No Admittance except for Workmen."

Yet even so exact a thinker and so careful a writer as Professor Henry Drummond, in his delightful and widely popular treatise entitled "Pax Vobiscum," seriously makes the mistake of supposing that the invitation of Jesus is to the tired and weary instead of to the overburdened yet vigorous and determined hard worker. He even says that it is a "direct appeal for all to come to Him who had not made much of life, who were weary and heavy laden." And many a layman and minister has made the same mistake as Professor Drummond.

There are two Greek words alike translated "rest" in the New Testament, one of which means a "let up" of toil, and the other a "let down" from toil. The word here translated "rest" signifies a let up of labor, or an uplift of it, in order to its better prosecution. The other word indicates a let down or cessation of labor. Here, therefore, the idea would seem to be of a rest that is a refreshing, or of a relief in labor, rather than of a rest that is a relief from labor. Indeed, the Douay version of the Bible, in use by Roman Catholics, better translates this invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are



burdened, and I will refresh you ;” and the English Church, as well as the American, Prayer-Book, also gives “refresh” for “rest.”

It is a refreshing of the soul through a change in the spirit and methods of work, and not through a cessation and an abandonment of toil, that our Lord indicates as the rest which he proffers to the hard worker in his service. When Jesus found a helpless cripple by the Pool of Bethesda (John 5: 1-17) bowed down under the weight of his burden of disease, he called him to rest by saying, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk” (John 5: 8),—as if he would say, “You have worked long enough doing nothing; now find refreshing in pleasurable labor. Up, and carry the bed on which you have been carried all these years.” And that was better for that poor cripple than a whole summer of hammock-swinging in the mountains or by the seashore would have been. This act of healing was performed on the sabbath day, and the Jews complained of Jesus because he told the man to rest working instead of to rest doing nothing. But Jesus said that his Father works on while resting, and that the truest pattern of rest, for God or for man, is in fitting and timely work.

Our Lord says to those who are well-nigh worked to death in the field of their daily labor,

and who are staggering under an inevitable burden that threatens to crush them to the earth: "Come unto me, and I will refresh you. Cease to count that burden yours. Let it be mine. Put your neck through the bow of my yoke. Fit your shoulders to my yokebeam. Fasten your burden to that. I will share it with you. Look at me, and see how I pull a load, uncomplainingly and in submissive determination. Follow my example; imitate my spirit as a worker; and you shall have such refreshing as will give you new life and new strength; for to be in my service, wearing my yoke, is to find hard work easy and a heavy load light."

In proportion as a yoke fits and suits the wearer, the burden drawn by it seems light; and the spirit in which one wears the yoke determines the ease with which it sets on him. Many a bright lad who would think his a hard yoke if he were called to sit at the front window of his father's house for three hours of a summer's day, to keep tally of the loads of coal being put into the home cellar, would count it an easy yoke that fastened him for the same length of time to the "bleaching boards" of the athletic grounds, under a scorching sun in June, or in a cold rain in November, checking the score in a sharply contested game between rival universities.

Young people and older ones seem to find refreshing, hour after hour, in golf links and on bicycles, at billiards or bowling, in whist or progressive eucher, at theaters or dances, when they would grow weary and exhausted in one-quarter of the time in hospital visiting, in Sunday-school teaching, in prayer-meeting attendance, or even in study or reading. Hard work that is called pleasure is easy work. Easy work that is counted dry duty is hard work.

Love gives rest in work, as better than rest from work. When Jacob found that he could win his loved Rachel by seven years of added toil for her hard-dealing father, "Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." (Gen. 29: 20.) Love for his country gives a soldier rest in his most toilsome service for that country. Abounding love for any person or object gives rest in needed toil for that object or person. Love for Christ gives refreshing continually to those who labor and are heavy laden in his service. In the pursuit of pleasure, of wealth, or of fame, "even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait on Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they

shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40: 30, 31); they shall rest in labor, rather than rest from labor.

## XXIII

### BUSY MARTHAS NEVER GOOD HOUSEKEEPERS

Worry is never a help in any proper occupation of man or woman. It is a hindrance in any and every line of practical service. Peculiarly is it true that in housekeeping, where woman is at her best, and where her power is greatest for good to all those who are within the sacred circle of home influence as permanent members or occasional visitors, worry and fretting and trouble of mind are only disturbing elements, tending to the lessening of the matron's power, and to the discomfort of all who are in any way dependent on her for comfort or supply. On the contrary, quietness of mind, restfulness of spirit, and composure of manner, are elements of power in a housekeeper, and of good to all who are affected by her efforts or labors.

This would seem to be an indisputable truth, yet it is not universally accepted, nor is it even believed by all who seriously consider the question as a question. A proof of this assertion is found in the Bible narrative of the two kinds of

women,—the restless, worrying one, and the placid, trustful one: Martha and Mary in the home in Bethany,—and in the ordinary comments on those two by the average reader, and even by many a preacher or commentator. This makes the whole subject one worthy of careful consideration by all who would know God's will for good women as the best part of God's creation, and also for men, who are lower down on the scale. Many a Bible reader actually seems to be of the opinion that the worrying woman was the better housekeeper of these two.

That Bethany home was one of the homes of Jesus,—a home of sacred friendship, a home where Jesus was always welcome, a home in connection with which we know more of the tenderer side of his human and social nature than we learn from any other portion of his life story. On one occasion, when Jesus came to that home needing human sympathy, both sisters wanted to do him honor. Mary recognized him as Master and Teacher, as something more than an ordinary guest, and she promptly took her place at his feet,—the Oriental position of an appreciative pupil,—ready to hear and heed his words. Martha, like the ordinary Oriental hostess, set herself to prepare food for her guest. Without stopping to inquire what was his special need,

she began to work and to worry over her plans of accustomed hospitable provision.

It was at this point that the unlovely and unhelpful side of Martha showed itself, and called out a rebuke from Jesus. Because of that censure of Jesus it is our duty to recognize the reason for it. To Martha, the restful inaction of Mary at the feet of Jesus was inexcusable. In the freedom and familiarity of friendship, but none the less inexcusable on that account, Martha bustled into the presence of Jesus, and rudely rebuked him, as it were, for seeming to aid and approve her sister's lack of helpfulness.

“Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 10: 40).

Now, apart from any question of the relative qualities of the two sisters, will any one say that this act of Martha's was courteous and considerate toward her guest? Would it be polite or kindly or proper toward a guest in your house, whom you were entertaining, or preparing to entertain, to burst in upon him when he was talking with another member of the family, and to suggest to him bluntly that he ought to know better than to keep away from her proper work in the household a needed member of the family with whom he was conversing? Can a woman be

called a good housekeeper who would conduct herself in this way as a hostess? How did Jesus seem to look at this? He never made a mistake on such a point or on any other. What did he say?

“The Lord answered [Martha] and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10: 41, 42).

In these words Jesus evidently reproved Martha and approved Mary for their relative courses of action in this matter. However we may wonder that he did so, we shall have to admit that this was his course. And if we examine yet more closely, we shall see that his words were eminently consistent with his other teachings. To be “cumbered,” as Jesus said Martha was, is, as the Greek word means, to “be distracted,” to be drawn this way and that, instead of being intent on the one thing to be done. Even in getting a dinner, or in doing anything else, Martha, in the exercise of this trait, could not give her whole attention to the one thing she had to do. In this Martha lacked the main essential of a good housekeeper—the ability to give her undivided attention to the one thing she had to



do for the time being. This is clearly implied or included in the rebuke of Jesus. Again, to be "anxious," as the Revision reads, or to be "careful," as the old version gave it, and "troubled" about many things, is to be perplexed and in a tumult as to pressing duty. That, surely, was not right in Martha, as Jesus plainly pointed out her error. We are distinctly told not to be anxious or to be troubled at any time, and the housekeeper or the business man who fails at this point fails in a vital matter.

In the question brought before Jesus by Martha, as to her course in comparison with Mary, he does not hesitate to render an explicit decision. He rebukes Martha's course in every particular that he touches on without saying a word of approval of her. He unqualifiedly commends Mary's course without a word of censure for her. Is not this finally conclusive as to the point at issue? One would think so.

But elsewhere it is also said that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11: 5). So he did, but that does not in itself imply that he commends in all things the course of any one of the three. It is also said that Jesus loved the young man who lacked the one thing needful according to the testimony of Jesus. Jesus loved Martha, not because she was a good

housekeeper, nor yet because she failed of being so, but because he is so loving that he loves even those who lack much.

The specific faults of worrying and being drawn away from the one duty of the hour, and of being over anxious, that Jesus pointed out in Martha, are as clearly reprehended and warned against in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere as are theft and murder; yet, strange to say, Martha is often commended by confessing Christians, not in spite of her faults, but as if those very faults were admirable. Comfort-loving husbands sometimes think of Mary as a pious do-nothing, who might be fitted for a high place in the future life, but who was not fitted for this life. Martha, on the other hand, is considered by them as the sort of practical housekeeper who would have the dinner ready on time, and the rooms swept, and the beds made. In their opinion, she is the kind of housekeeper for the average home. Some active and efficient wives and housekeepers are even willing to speak of themselves frankly as "busy Marthas," when they would never want to be called "lively Sapphiras." This they do, not by way of admitting their unworthiness and incompetence, but in the thought that they are claiming a share of real merit.

Even scholarly Christian commentators, who

are supposed to have examined the original text, incline to suggest that there is something to be said on both sides of the question, although Jesus seems to have considered but one side as worthy of his approval. Thus one of these commentators says: "The one [sister] represents the contemplative, the other the active, style of the Christian character. A church full of Marys would be as great an evil as a church full of Marthas. Both are wanted, each to be the complement of the other."

Only think of it! A church full of the sort of persons whose ways Jesus commended would be as great an evil as a church full of those persons who possess the characteristics which Jesus disapproved! Away with such misconceptions and perversions of the texts as these! Away with all such comments on the plain teachings of Scripture even by the most distinguished of misguided commentators!

Martha was wrong in being anxiously worried over many things that might be done, instead of attending faithfully to her single duty of the hour. This Jesus recognized, and therefore he reproved her. Mary was right in doing the one thing that was to be done, when her divine Master and guest wanted just that duty done, and for this Jesus commended her.

Mary had the qualities that would make a better housekeeper than was Martha. She could do more work and do it better, in an hour or in a day, than could Martha; and she would make less fuss over it, and this would be less annoying to herself, to her family, and to her guests. We have every reason to suppose that this was evidenced in her everyday practice.

We have no authority for supposing that Martha was the only one of the sisters to attend to the housekeeping in the Bethany home, and that Mary left it all to her to do. The very fact that Martha came to Jesus with her complaint that Mary was failing to help on that particular occasion indicates that Martha was accustomed to expect Mary's help at ordinary times. Jesus, as a loving guest, had certainly a right to the presence and listening ear of at least one of the sisters. Martha, when it was her turn in the kitchen, evidently wanted both Jesus and Mary to be at her service; for that is the way with fidgety and fussy women when they have their work to attend to.

If it had been Mary's turn in the kitchen, that day, she would have attended to her one duty there, and have been glad to have Martha, meantime, filling her place, as a good listener, at the feet of Jesus. Mary would not then have left

the kitchen in order to complain of Martha, and to make her guest uncomfortable. True hospitality shows itself in other ways toward a guest than in getting a dinner at the cost of discomfort to all in the house, guests included.

The story of the sisters in Bethany shows us how a true woman is to do a true woman's work, whatever that work may be, by attending to it at the proper time, and not seeming to be worried over it, or about anything else. It shows us, moreover, how not to be efficient as a housekeeper through worrying and fretting.

Here is also a lesson for men in their sphere, as well as for women in theirs. "A double-minded man [or a man cumbered with a divided purpose] unstable [and therefore ineffective] in all his ways" (Jas. 1: 8). Man or woman is really efficient in choosing and in attending to the one thing needful for the hour. The Bible record is clear on that point, whatever preachers or commentators, or thoughtless business men, or inefficient housewives, may think or say on the subject.

## XXIV

### CLERGYMEN NOT THE CHIEF PREACHERS

It is a very common idea that only an ordained or regularly commissioned preacher should preach; that preachers are necessarily a class by themselves; that ordinary laymen, or private church members, would be infringing on the duties of a special and privileged class or order of men if they presumed to preach. Yet this idea is not found expressed in the Bible, and it gains no countenance from the teachings of that book.

Our English word "preach" is used as the equivalent of at least two Hebrew words and five Greek words, with their varying meanings. It includes the call, or warning, of a herald; the telling of good tidings; and the discoursing fully and at length concerning a special theme. In its first two meanings, of heralding and evangelizing, it obviously is a duty for all who know of a danger or of a means of good to make it known to others. In the third meaning, of extended and thorough discourse, it is rather teaching than

preaching that is meant ; it is a means of instructing, instead of mere inviting or warning. In no one of the three senses is preaching limited by the Bible to ordained or appointed ministers or clergymen ; yet here is where a misunderstanding of Bible teachings is common and widespread.

What would be thought of a man who discovered a fire breaking out in a neighbor's house at midnight, and who refused to give an alarm because he was not a regular policeman or an authorized watchman? That would be acting on the idea that prompts a man to refrain from heralding the good news of salvation to sinners because he is not an ordained clergyman.

The question of the importance of an ordained and educated ministry is quite by itself. A clergyman's work includes duties of administration, officiating at services of various kinds, leading in public worship, the administering of sacraments, instructing those who are under his care, and speaking words of invitation and warning to all whom he can reach. But this last duty he shares with all the followers of his Master ; it is in no sense an exclusive prerogative of his office or class.

An old clergyman of the stricter Covenanters, rigid though he was in all ecclesiastical matters, said on this point, " Every man has a natural right



to preach." Then he proceeded to show that the public setting apart of a man as a clergyman includes a great deal more than telling him that he has the right to preach, as all men have. Of course, a minister has as good a right to preach as any other man, even though preaching is not a distinctively ministerial act. As Dr. Richard S. Storrs said, "It is the first duty of a minister to be a good layman;" but that does not deprive the layman of his duty to do the same as a minister in this particular.

A minister's chief duty is not that of preaching the gospel in his pulpit to the unevangelized, and urging them to come into the church fold. That work his people ought to be doing at all times, although he can have his part with them in this also. When newcomers are brought under his pastoral care, it is for him to instruct and train them faithfully. There is the great need of a wise and careful master workman.

As Mr. Moody says, "It is better to set ten men at work than to do the work of ten men." A minister's sphere would be enlarged, and his power increased, if all his people were preachers, at work in season and out of season, warning and entreating souls, and bringing new disciples under the pastor's care for instruction and training. This would not be doing the pastor's work



for him, but it would be giving him more work to do, and better work, continually.

Whatever preaching the minister can do in the line of heralding invitations and warnings, and proclaiming the good news of salvation, at special services in his church or outside of it, is indeed important as his part of a disciple's mission. "As ye go, preach" (Matt. 10: 7) is a command to the ministers as to all other disciples; and, whatever is their distinctive ministerial work, they should not neglect this important duty. Nevertheless, this is not an exclusive ministerial function. A minister shares the right to it with all the believers.

Preaching is no more the principal mission or right of a clergyman than is fighting the prerogative of a colonel of a regiment in war time. A colonel's chief duty is to oversee and direct his soldiers, and to secure their action most advantageously, whether he takes part personally in the fighting or not. Urging others to enlist, and bringing recruits to the commander for training and leading, is a duty that every private soldier can have a part in. And when recruits are fairly mustered in, they are to take their full share, in recruiting and fighting, instead of merely watching the officers do it all. As it is in the army of a temporal government, so it

ought to be in the Lord's army. It was said of the Waldenses, five centuries ago, "He who has been a disciple for seven days looks out some one whom he may teach in his turn, so that there is a continual increase [of them]." Seven days is quite long enough for any disciple of Christ to be in his fold, before he begins to preach about Christ.

So general, however, is the popular error that preaching from a pulpit by an ordained or specially appointed minister is alone proper preaching, that the Great Commission which is our Lord's command to his disciples for evangelizing, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15), seems to be generally understood as though it read, "Come ye from all the world, and hear the gospel preached." In this view of the Great Commission, the responsibility is practically supposed to rest on the unevangelized to come to the church in order to be preached to, instead of on the preacher to look up the unevangelized, wherever they are, and preach to them. Indeed, Bishop Huntington has suggested that by their system of pew-rents many churches seem to say to the unevangelized, "Come to our church regularly, and pay twenty-five cents a week for your seat, and our preacher will try to convert

you." Outsiders are certainly liable to think that this is the way that the churches look at the matter.

It would seem, indeed, as if many were so desirous of conforming strictly to the inspired declaration that it is God's plan and "good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching [or the simple heralding of the truth] to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1: 21) it, that they are possessed with the idea that there ought to be something essentially foolish in the manner of preaching, or in the limitation of warnings and invitations to a special class in a particular place. But the Bible does not justify this idea, or say anything of this nature.

Of course, all who would join in the public worship of God ought to be church attendants. Of course, all who would have the public ministrations of the church and its clergymen should seek them there. Of course, all who are desirous to know the truth, and are inquirers concerning the way to God, ought to go to the minister, if the minister does not come to them. Of course, all who wish to be instructed and trained in spiritual knowledge have their place in the church where such knowledge is imparted. But the having a building where all this can be found by those who desire it, is not by any means the

first duty, or the chief one, of a church and its minister; nor is the man who leads the services there the one to do the most of the gospel preaching that ought to be done by that church.

The beginning of the Christian Church shows who preached effectively at the start, and how the preaching was done. John the Baptist told Andrew and John about Jesus. Andrew went and told Peter. John went and told James. Philip told Nathanael. This was not public preaching by an ordained clergyman in an auditorium. It was man-to-man preaching by the simple telling of good news, and the inviting to share in its benefits. The early believers went everywhere preaching, or proclaiming the good news. Philip left a crowd of listeners at Samaria to find one man in a chariot and tell him about Jesus (Acts 8: 26-40), and in that way the gospel was carried into the "Dark Continent." Thus the gospel has been preached most effectively all the way along to the present day. Mr. Beecher expressed a great truth when he said, as the result of his personal experience and observation: "The longer I live, the more I realize that the best sermons are those where one man is the minister and one man is the congregation; where the preaching is face to face and eye to eye; where there is no doubt as to who is meant

by the words, 'Thou art the man.'” Whoever can preach thus ought to preach.

Whoever knows of danger to his fellows, and warns them of it, is a preacher. Whoever is possessed of good news, and lets it be known, is a preacher. He does not need to be a clergyman, or to stand in a pulpit. Wherever he is face to face with a needy soul he ought to preach; he fails of his duty if he then neglects his opportunity to heed the Great Commission. Whether it be a teacher with his pupil, a merchant with his clerk, a mistress with her servant, a neighbor with a neighbor, whoever it be who gives a warning or an invitation from God which is explicit, direct, and personal, or who puts a straight question to another as to an interest in Christ's salvation, there is a preacher, and there is preaching. As Richard Baxter says, so may any one of us say, “I hope there is none so silly as to think this conference is not preaching. What, doth the number we speak to make it preaching? Or doth interlocution make it none? Surely a man may as truly preach to one as to a thousand.”

Every one of us has a mission to be a preacher. Every one of us ought to preach. If all of us were preaching as we have opportunity, how greatly the power of the church would be in-

creased, and how much of good might come to the needy! The misunderstanding of the scope and duty of preaching, and of the call to every believer to preach, is one of the chief causes of neglected duty and of barren results in this sphere.

## CHASTISEMENT NOT PUNISHMENT\*

Many seem to think that chastisement and punishment are practically identical. A picture, or reading book wood-cut, familiar to many now living, represented an irate farmer driving out of his orchard, or punishing in it, a bad boy, who had been caught stealing apples. The expression on the old man's face was anything but a loving or benevolent one, as he was swinging in his uplifted hand a switch, or bunch of rods, while the frightened boy was held in his firm grasp, and was caused to feel the old man's vengeance. Underneath this picture was the legend that told of "an angry farmer chastising a rude boy who was purloining apples from his orchard." That picture represented the ordinary view of chastisement as a punitive or retributive measure in the interests of stern justice.

Most readers would have the same idea of chastisement as they read in the Bible of young Rehoboam—the son and successor of Solomon—

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\*An incidental reference has been made to this truth in an earlier chapter; but it deserves fuller and separate treatment.

saying to the representatives of the people over whom he was to rule, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12: 14). Those certainly do not seem to be words of love, prompted by a desire for the subjects' good. Hence chastisement, in both the Bible and other books, seems to convey the idea of vindictiveness and retribution, rather than a method of promoting the welfare of the persons under treatment.

Yet again we read words in the Bible that seem to convey a very different idea. Thus:

"My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,  
Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him;  
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,  
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12: 5, 6).

"What son is there whom his father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12: 7). "If ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12: 8). And thus in many another place in the Old Testament and the New. It is true that the English word "chasten," as used in the Bible and outside of it, has a gentler and a softer sound than "chastise," and we are not accustomed to connect the idea of harshness, or retri-



bution, or vindictiveness, with chastening, as we ordinarily do with chastising. Yet in the original Hebrew and Greek the words "chasten" and "chastise" are practically the same, and the difference in our way of looking at them grows out of our way of thinking about them. It is what Professor Riddle calls a matter of eisegesis, rather than exegesis,—what we read into the words, rather than what we read out of them.

"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O  
Jehovah,  
And teachest out of thy law,"

and where, in 1 Kings 12: 14, Rehoboam said to the people, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chasten you with scorpions," the Hebrew verb is the same in every respect that is translated in one case "chasten" and in the other "chastise." So it is not easy to show that chastise is of itself a harsher word than chasten.

To "chasten" and to "chastise" a child by a parent, or a person by a ruler, is primarily to train, to teach, to discipline, to instruct; the meaning to "punish" seems to be, in the opinion of eminent etymologists and lexicographers, a secondary meaning, growing out of human cus-

toms and practices. The primary meaning of the word looks to the future; the secondary and acquired meaning of it looks to the past. To train or to teach has in mind the future good of the person; to punish has in mind the person's past. The one is anticipatory in its purpose; the other is retributory, and in a sense vindictive.

Whether human authority, parental or judicial, has any right, at any time, to be retaliatory or vindictive, is a question in many minds. The idea conveyed in the words of God, "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Heb. 12: 19) means more in the minds of some than of others. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that in the few instances in the Bible where chastise seems to mean retributive or in any sense vindictive, the reference is to God's action, not to man's. When Rehoboam (1 Kings 12: 14) tells the people of Israel, "I will chastise you with scorpions," he obviously is not threatening to punish them for acts which they had committed, for they have not been under him until now. He is speaking of the future and of his purpose of instructing or training them in the way, or course, in which he would have them go. But when it is said (Lev. 26: 28) "I will chastise you seven times for

your sins," it is God, not man, who claims the right of retaliatory punishment.

How many misguided and wrong-doing parents have perverted the words of sacred writ, and have severely, or inhumanly, punished their children because of some misdeed, or failure, of theirs, without a thought or purpose of love to the child, or of his right training for the future! The bitter chastisement has been in view of what has been, rather than in view of what should be. It is, indeed, often well to look at a child's failures or misdeeds in the past in order to know what is the child's danger or need in the future. But in this case, as in every other, an act of wise and kind chastening or chastising is to be performed as a loving help to the training and future good of the child, not as a recompensing punishment of what has been done.

A much misunderstood, and therefore often misquoted, proverb (Prov. 13: 24) reads:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son;  
But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

This proverb has been misused as a supposed justification of using a switch or strap for the thrashing or flogging a child because of his misdeeds. Yet a careful examination of the words as they stand should show the ordinary reader how far from the truth is such an idea.

The "rod" as here used is a sceptre, or sign and symbol of authority and rule, and government. When it was prophesied (Gen. 49: 10) that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah;" and again (Zech. 10: 11) "The sceptre of Egypt shall depart," and in other references to royal dominion, the same Hebrew word is used that is here rendered "rod," as the symbol of parental authority. A parent has a duty to govern wisely and lovingly his child, so as to guide and direct and instruct his child to its well-doing and God-serving in maturer years. A parent ought always to have a rod, or a sceptre, of authority. But many a child has been trained without a single flogging, or anything like it. Neither chastening nor chastising is necessarily punishing or flogging.

How many parents and teachers use chastening or chastising as if it were a form of retaliatory punishment, simply because they themselves are wholly ignorant of their duty! If those parents or teachers had been properly trained, their children would be differently, and more hopefully, cared for.

## MIZPAH: A BARRIER, NOT A BOND

A favorite symbol of union, or synonym of a loving covenant, is the Hebrew word "Mizpah." It is engraved on rings of betrothal or marriage, or on brooches and bracelets and other gifts, as a pledge of undying affection. There seems to be no doubt in the popular mind, or even in the mind of scholars generally, as to the significance of this word in its appropriateness to such use; yet, as a matter of fact, there is no foundation for the idea, other than in the misunderstanding of an English sentence accompanying its mention in a single place in the Bible story. By that misunderstanding a barrier separating two persons is supposed to be a bond uniting them: a limitation of the rights of each is counted a loving link between both.

Laban and Jacob seemed to be fairly well matched in their craftiness and cunning, yet, in a long series of years Jacob had the advantage of his father-in-law in the struggle (Gen. 29-31). When Jacob took his wives and children and flocks, with a portion of Laban's sacred belong-

ings, and secretly left Padan Aram for his paternal home in lower Canaan, Laban angrily pursued him, and overtook him at Mt. Gilead. There the two reproached each other, each for seeking to overreach and defraud the other. Finally they agreed to disagree, and to enter into a covenant of peaceful disagreement. They set up a stone pillar, and a stone-heap of testimony, on the territorial boundary line agreed on between the two. Each was to keep himself on his side of the line, and not to pass over it to harm the other. The Lord, the God of their fathers, was to be witness of this covenant, and he was to see that it was faithfully observed (Gen. 31: 44-53).

They called the heap of stones "the witness heap:" in Laban's dialect, "Jegar-sahadutha;" in Jacob's, "Galeed." The pillar, or tower, they called "Mizpah," "the watch tower;" for Laban said, "Jehovah watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." This has commonly been considered as meaning that the Lord would keep the two in loving union or accord while they were temporarily apart. But a close examination of the facts, in the light of primitive customs, shows that its import is rather that the Lord would see to it that they kept apart in a sacred regard for each

other's rights, and that he would visit judgment on them if they did not recognize the established boundary line of division.

In the earliest records we have of Oriental civilization, the stone pillar, or obelisk, as a boundary landmark stands prominent for the division of the territory of tribes and peoples and kingdoms. This custom prevailed long before the day of Laban and Jacob. An accompanying stone-heap as an altar, for sacrifice or for a sacramental meal, was commonly near the pillar. Each conventional boundary stone pillar was under the guardianship and protection of a local divinity, or of the god worshiped by its setter-up. The curse of that divinity was invoked against whoever should remove or destroy the boundary mark. The invoked divinity would be always on watch and guard for the defense of the boundary, even though the land owner was at the time far away, and ignorant of an effort to violate the covenanted dividing line.

In this instance, Laban and Jacob invoked the Lord God of their fathers to watch the agreed boundary, and to protect it from violation by either of the covenanting parties. In view of the clearly established purpose of such a border watch-tower, it is somewhat singular that "Mizpah" has come to be regarded as a sacred bond

of union, instead of as an assurance of permanent division.

To give a ring, or a bracelet, or a brooch, with "Mizpah" engraved on it, at the time of betrothal or marriage, might be properly understood as suggesting, "A line is drawn between us that must be sacredly observed. You have your rights on one side of it, and I have my right on the other side. Let the rights of each be sacredly guarded by the other. There is to be no common life between us. The Lord watch between us all the time, so that the rights of either be not harmed."

But that is not the idea of those who inscribe "Mizpah" on a betrothal or wedding ring; or of those who use it as a covenant watchword or motto. And this is because of the very common misunderstanding of a Bible term.



## XXVII

### THE INFERIORITY OF ANGELS

What is an angel? What is an angel at his best? There are certain well-defined ideas as to this order of beings, ideas that are prevalent among children and artists, and even among prominent theologians; but the question is, are these ideas intelligently based, and is there any ground, in the Bible teachings, for supposing that they are reasonably accurate.

The children sing heartily—as heartily as if there were sense in the words—about angels:

“I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand.  
A crown upon my forehead,  
And a harp within my hand.”

Dante and Milton and Raphael and Murillo and Dore and other artists, modern or ancient, have pictured angels with wings and harps and other instruments, thus giving some reason for the children's song. But as to authoritative statements concerning angels the Bible text is more trustworthy than either children or artists, and this it is that makes confusion when the Bible text is examined, even with the aid of eminent commentators.

Many of our ideas concerning angels have come from Jewish Talmudic writings and from the writings of Muhammadans, yet we would hardly claim that these were to be held, as an authority, in comparison with the Bible record, for a Christian's guidance. Yet we quote, as if authoritatively, some of these non-Christian writings about angels as freely as we do Milton and Dante.

Among learned commentators, Hooker—"the judicious Hooker"—a divine of whom Hallam the historian and critic says that he is the finest, as well as the most philosophical writer of the Elizabethan period, declares, as if authoritatively, that angels "are spirits, immaterial and intellectual, the glorious inhabitants of those sacred palaces, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, . . . all joy, tranquillity and peace, even forever, doth dwell. As, in numbers, they are huge, mighty, and royal armies, so likewise [are they] in perfection of obedience unto that law which the Highest, whom they adore, love, and imitate, hath imposed upon them. . . . Beholding the face of God, they adore him; being rapt with love of his beauty, they cleave unto him; desiring to resemble him, they try to do good unto all creatures, and especially unto the children of men."

And one of the standard modern dictionaries of the Bible says: "By the word 'angels' . . . we ordinarily understand a race of spiritual beings of a nature exalted far above that of man, although infinitely removed from that of God, whose office is to do him service in heaven, and by his appointment to succor and defend men on earth."

Yet if we stop to examine closely the Bible record, we are likely to be surprised at finding how small a proportion of these popularly believed statements concerning angels have a substantial basis for their existence.

To turn to the record of man's creation, who would ever be led to suppose that man was lower than the crowning work of God's handiwork? Does God seem to say, "We have creatures approaching our own image, but we will now form some who are lower than the highest of these, and see what can be done with such?" That is not the record. The record is "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1: 26)—not of a lower order than angels, but after the very likeness of God, and in God's very image.

There were good angels and fallen angels at that time, but there is no record of any such interest on God's part in the fallen angels as there

was in fallen man, when Jesus Christ came among men to save them. God's crowning work of creation was man. Angels were below that standard, and they have always remained there.

The gospel and its messages are gifts of God in which we rejoice, and for which we are grateful, "which things," as Peter says, "angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1: 12). Does that seem to point to angels as if they were man's superiors in either capability or possibilities? Is there anything in the Bible that would cause us to believe that angels are superior to the race created in God's own image, and in the form which God's own Son took upon himself in working out salvation? "Know ye not," said Paul, "that we shall judge angels?" at the end of this age, "how much more, things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor. 6: 3). Does that look as if angels were our superiors? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1: 14). What reason have any to think angels superior to, or the equals of, redeemed saints?

In the first place, we are liable to be misled by the word "angel," which does not mean what it seems to mean. We commonly think of an "angel" as the painter, or sculptor, or poet, has

represented it; and we take it for granted that the artist had some basis for his representation. At all events, we think of an "angel" as being a well-defined form, when we have no reason to think so. While we do not know exactly the form of an angel, we can be sure that an angel is not in any sense as the painter, or the sculptor, or the poet, or the ordinary commentator, has represented him.

The word translated "angel," or as transferred from the original, in the Bible text, means simply "messenger" or "agent." If it had been uniformly translated thus, as it sometimes is, with no indication of its being a peculiar class of beings, as in 1 Samuel 19: 20, Job 1: 14, Luke 7: 24; 9: 51, and in scores of other places in the Old Testament and in the New, there would have been less confusion as to its meaning. Moreover, the word "messenger," or "agent," or "representative," would hardly have excited the imagination of artists to their present representation of angels. An angel, as the Bible represents or speaks of an angel, is not only generally a man, or being inferior to man who is the crowning work of creation, but it is sometimes not an intelligent being, although sometimes it is such. An angel, or a messenger, or an agent, of God, may be a pestilence, or a hur-

ricane, or a flame, or other agency of destruction. Thus, as in Psalm 104, where God's angels are spirits, and his ministers are a flaming fire. As the term "angel" is always a figure of speech, and never a closely defining term, there is some reason for our misunderstanding it. Of course, if God would send a message from the spirit world to man, God would select what seemed like man, as man could not perceive a spirit. But that would not show what was the ordinary form or personality of an angel.

Perhaps the figurative language of the closing book of the New Testament is responsible for much of the popular misrepresentations of angels as they are. Yet no intelligent reader supposes that the figures of speech in Revelation are to be taken literally. And the Jewish Talmudic literature has undoubtedly largely influenced our Christian thought, and often for harm.

Of one thing we may be sure, neither the Old Testament nor the New gives us to understand that angels are the equals of human beings formed in the image and likeness of God, or that they will ever have the spiritual privileges and power of those who are redeemed in Christ.

It is true that the word "angel" is sometimes employed in the Bible when the context would indicate that it refers to the Christ. In such

cases, of course, the angel is of an order vastly superior to man, but that superiority is in the One who is the messenger, not in his being a messenger, or an angel.

## XXVIII

### CHERUBIM UTTERLY UNLIKE ANGELS

Pictures and poems have, perhaps, done as much to mislead both young and old as to the true meaning of Bible texts and Bible teachings as any other human agency. In some cases the painter, or the poet, has himself misread Bible words, and thus been a pioneer misleader as to the truth taught. In other cases the picture, or the poem, simply represents, or reproduces, the erroneous popular view of what is exhibited, or suggested in the Bible. Thus Michelangelo having misunderstood the word, in the Latin version of the Bible, for "rays" or "horns" of light on the encircled head of Moses, perpetuated his mistake to the misleading of future generations, by carving in stone his magnificent Moses, with two matter-of-fact horns growing out of his great skull. And Dante and Milton have probably shaped more of the generally accepted ideas, even as expressed by prominent preachers in the pulpit, concerning angels and demons, and their doings in heaven and in hell, than all the pages of the Bible put together.

But perhaps of all the persons, places and



things spoken of in the Bible none have been more generally, or more completely, misunderstood and misrepresented than angels and cherubim. In the first place, angels and cherubim are often spoken of as if they were of the same order of beings, or having something in common, when in fact there seems to be no justification of, or excuse for, this remarkable blunder in any text or teaching of the Bible. Poets and painters generally seem disposed to represent an angel as a delicate young woman in a dress, or gown, with a long train. Yet the Bible generally represents an angel, or a celestial messenger, or servitor, as an able-bodied man set to doing the Lord's work. It is to the honor of women that, in the holiest teachings, the hewing of wood and the drawing of water, and the doing of guard duty, and even the running of errands, and all such work, are supposed to be in man's line, rather than woman's in the celestial sphere. But the painters and poets, at all events the more popular poets, take quite the opposite view of this from that given by the inspired writers.

It would certainly seem a bad enough blunder to represent an angel as a delicate young woman, but even this is outdone by the more baseless and more absurd blunder of representing a

cherub (the singular of the plural, or dual, term cherubim) as similarly a delicate young woman in evening dress. Yet this blunder of blunders has been made by many persons, who have actually read their Bible even if they have not studied it. How the Bible text is misused and perverted!

Raphael, in his Sistine Madonna, conforms to, or suggests, the popular idea of a "cherub" when he paints two bright little boys, as if attending spirits, or angels, delightfully impressed by the Divine Child in his Virgin Mother's arms. Milton tells how

"The cherubic host in thousand choirs  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires."

And, even in our comparatively enlightened time, our Lowell says, out of memories of a lamented child,

"He seemed a cherub who had lost his way,  
And wandered hither."

Now, while none of us can say with positiveness just what was the precise shape or form of the Bible cherub, all of us can say positively that the Bible describes the cherubim as something very unlike little boys, or young women, or even like the popular conception, or the Bible description, of God's "angels," or spiritual messengers.

The Bible speaks of a cherub, or of the dual cherubim, as part ox, and part lion, and part eagle, and part man (Ezek. 10: 14). That does not answer to the description of any known being in this world, so that we can be confident that in it we have a truer suggestion of the Bible cherub than is found in a little boy, a young woman, or an active man. Yet in view of well-known Oriental imagery, we can see that the ox represents service, the lion represents strength, the eagle represents aspiration, or power of flight, and the man represents intelligence and human God-likeness. All these symbols are in God's creation, and all conjoin for the doing of God's will at his command or appointment.

The first Bible mention of cherubim is when they were placed at the entrance to Eden, to guard it from outside approach, after the expulsion of our first parents. That certainly does not suggest the idea of a little boy, or a young woman, put on guard, even if armed with a revolving and flaming sword. Again, there were cherubim above the Ark of the covenant, inside of which there was an explicit agreement that there should be no likeness, or image, of anything in earth or heaven tolerated by God's children. That forbids the thought of figures of little boys, of young women, or man-like angels,

but it does not forbid the idea of symbols of truth which were and are not images of existing creatures.

In more than one place in the Bible (2 Sam. 22: 11; Psa. 18: 10) it is said of the Almighty, when he would respond to an appeal from his earthly children, that

“He rode upon a cherub and did fly.”

Who, in view of that, would entertain, or countenance, the thought of a little boy, or a young woman, or of a man-shaped angel, as being the upbearer of the Almighty from place to place? Yet the symbolic forces of creation, as represented in the Bible references to the cherubim, may well be thought of as accompanying the Almighty in his movements in the universe.

We, not unnaturally, want to think of anything that we read of, or hear of, as measurably like something that we have actually seen or known of. Each of our ideals has its basis or promptings in some real in our sphere of experience or thought. But an Oriental prefers to think of spiritual things, or religious truths, as suggested, rather than described in the things of nature. Thus, while we might think of a cherub or an angel as a boy, or a young woman, or a man, because we are acquainted with those objects in nature, an Oriental would feel sure

that any human pattern could not represent the spiritual and supernatural to which his thoughts were directed. He prefers to think of something beyond all that he has seen or known. Thus in the symbolic and suggestive cherubim, with its combination of all that is best in nature, and with yet more above and beyond; for we must ever bear in mind that the Bible was written by Orientals, and primarily for Orientals.

The idea of teaching and impressing religious truth by symbolism through a combination of representative ideas in the form of various created beings is not peculiar to the Hebrews, nor did it originate with them. Long before Moses was born, or before the Bible writings as we have them were begun, the idea was a common one in the world. This symbolism was very different from idolatry, or from image worship, even though evil man might in any case pervert the suggestive symbols into an object of wrong worship. Thus with the Egyptian Sphinx, with the head of a man and the body of a lion. These figures surmounted a temple, or bordered an avenue to a temple, not as idols, but as typical of strength and wisdom. In Greece the Sphinx combined the form of the lion, the woman, and the eagle; for in Greece they gave more prominence than in Egypt to grace, beauty and imag-

ination, in addition to their high estimate of strength.

Again, in Babylon and Assyria there were the human-headed and winged bulls at the threshold of the palaces and temples of rulers and priests. These perhaps more nearly resembled the cherubim at the threshold of Eden, and at other points in Hebrew history. We need not suppose that the Hebrews imitated any of the Egyptian or Assyrian symbolic forms when they made the cherubim, nor even that the Hebrews received a suggestion from them, but we can perceive that the use in imagery of a combination of created forms as suggestive of important spiritual truths was a well-known mode of teaching long before the days of Moses, or Jacob, or Abraham.

It has, indeed, been suggested by eminent Bible scholars, that this known truth, combined with the very words of the Hebrew text, give occasion for thinking that the "golden calf" worshiped before Mt. Sinai was a cherubic form, rather than the form of Apis or another Egyptian divinity. It is also thought by many that the "calves" set up by Jeroboam at Dan and Bethel were cherubim, to suggest that the mercy seat was the whole land of Israel between the cherubim, now that the Temple at Jerusalem

was no longer the place for worship by Israelites. However this may be, we know enough to be sure that we are not justified in supposing that cherubim and angels are of the same class or order or appearance of beings. It would be no more unreasonable for us to claim that a well-made kaleidoscope, with its varying suggestions, is identical with a recognized postman and letter-carrier bringing a precious letter from his loved home to a longing son separated from his dearest ones of the home and the heart.

## XXIX

### SPIRIT, NOT SOUL, MAN'S PRE-EMINENCE

It seems to be commonly believed, among the poorly informed, that the soul of man is the spirit of man, and that therefore man's soul is his pre-eminent possession, which distinguishes him from the lower animals and the brute creation. But this opinion is not in accordance with Bible teachings, or with sound reasoning.

The lower animals have bodies and souls. Man alone has body, and soul, and spirit. It is the spirit, therefore, and not the soul, that marks man's pre-eminence. A failure to recognize this truth is a failure to appreciate the superiority of man, even the lowest of the human race, to the lower animals, even the highest and best trained of the brute creation.

But man and the lower animals have a material body, and a life, an animal life, within the body, which is common to, or alike in, the two orders of being. That which is the life of the body, which vivifies the body and enables it to perform its functions, is much the same in man and brutes. In the Hebrew and in the Greek



the word designating this animal life is ordinarily the same for both man and the lower animals. Both in the Old Testament and in the New this word is translated "soul." The word "soul" therefore applies to that animal life which man has in common with the brutes. If this be immortal in man, it would seem to be immortal in brutes; but there is nothing in the Bible which seems to justify the belief that immortality attaches to the soul or the mere animal life in brutes, or in man.

Man has, however, that which distinguishes him from the brute, that which is his highest possession, or nature, and which marks him as above all others who dwell in mortal bodies. That possession, or nature, is not the "soul," but the "spirit." "God is a spirit," and man, in having a spirit, is so far God-like, capable of knowing God and of aspiring to God. Immortality attaches to God's spirit, and, because man is like God in having a spirit, it is fair to conclude that man's spirit, not man's soul, is immortal. While it is quite proper to say, in view of these well-known facts, that not only gorillas and chimpanzees, but dogs and cats and birds, as well as men, have souls, have animal life distinct from their bodies, it cannot be said with any show of reason that any being but man has

an immortal spirit; that is only man's high possession or nature.

Both in the Old Testament and in the New the word translated "soul" means "life," and is frequently so rendered. In many instances it would not make sense unless it were translated by such a term. Thus, "As to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof. . . . For the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Lev. 17: 14). The Hebrew word here rendered "life" is the same as that rendered "soul" where it is said of the Israelites, "Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Jehovah" (Exod. 30: 12); and again, where offerings are spoken of as brought to the Lord "to make atonement for our souls" (Num. 31: 50). But no translator would think of saying, "The [animal] blood . . . is all one with the [immortal] soul." So, again, where Satan is represented as saying of Job, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2: 4), it would be absurd to suppose that Satan deemed every man ready always to count his immortal portion as above every earthly interest. Yet it is the same Hebrew word here rendered "life," as that given as "soul" in the declaration, "Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that

take refuge in him shall be condemned" (Psa. 34: 22). It is the corresponding Greek word employed in the New Testament, where Jesus asks, "What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (or, as the Revision renders it, "and forfeit his life" Matt. 16: 26).

This term, it is true, sometimes stands for the individual as a living being, as where, in cases of disobedience, "that soul [which hath disobeyed] shall be cut off from his people" (Gen. 17: 14); and again where in an estimate of the spoils of war, it is said that "one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the oxen, and of the asses, and of the flocks" (Num. 31: 28) is to be taken. In other instances it has a broader application as applying to, or as representing, the whole self. Thus, "My soul shall be joyful in Jehovah: it shall rejoice in his salvation" (Psa. 35: 9); and "Hear, and your soul shall live" (Isa. 55: 3). It is in this broader sense that Jesus seems to employ it, where, in the instance above cited, he asks, "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [or self]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life [or self]?" (Matt. 16: 26). Thus, again, in Matthew, it is said that we are to "fear him who is able to destroy

both soul and body [the entire self] in hell."

In this sense, "soul" may be used to include the immortal spirit, the entire being or personality; but nowhere is the word "soul" in either Testament specifically given for the immortal part of man, living after the death of the body and the soul. It is indeed, however, used as distinct from the spirit in various instances. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee earnestly" (Isa. 26: 9); "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 23).

It is the "spirit" of man, not the "soul," which is spoken of in the Bible as the higher portion or nature of man, as over against, and frequently as in conflict with, the "body" as his lower portion or nature. Elihu says to Job, concerning man's capacity to receive wisdom:

"There is a spirit in man,  
And the breath of the Almighty [or "the inspiration  
of the Almighty," as the Auth. Ver. has it] giveth  
them understanding" (Job 32: 8).

Says the Psalmist:

Into thy hand I commend my spirit:  
Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, thou God of  
truth (Psa. 31: 5).

It is said in the Proverbs:

All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes:  
But Jehovah weigheth the spirits (Prov. 16: 2).

The call of God to Israel is:

Cast away from you all your transgressions, where-  
in ye have transgressed; and make you a new  
heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O  
house of Israel? (Ezek. 18: 31).

It is in the New Testament as in the Old.  
“Who among men knoweth the things of a man,  
save the spirit of the man which is in him?”  
(1 Cor. 2: 11). Our life in the body is so to be  
lived “that the spirit [not the soul] may be  
saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor.  
5: 5). The standard to strive for is of one  
“holy both in body and in spirit” (1 Cor. 7: 34).  
We are to “cleanse ourselves from all defile-  
ment of flesh and spirit” (2 Cor. 7: 1); and we  
are not to “walk after the flesh in the lust of  
defilement” (2 Pet. 2: 10). That which is pop-  
ularly supposed to be the soul, as the higher and  
the immortal nature of man, is throughout the  
Bible spoken of as the spirit which man has from  
God, which can aspire after God, and can come  
to be joined to God (1 Cor. 6: 17).

Of course, there are particular texts in the  
Bible which might at first glance seem not recon-  
cilable with the view that it is the spirit, and not

the soul, which is man's highest nature, and which gives to him the possibility of immortality as distinguished from the brutes. Yet a little examination shows that these texts are all consistent with that view, or are specially confirmatory of it.

“Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?” (Eccl. 3: 21). That would seem to put man and the beast on a level as to the possession of a spirit. But that is given in Ecclesiastes—or Koheleth—as a skeptic's question, as the question of one who doubts whether man has a superior nature and destiny to the brutes. It is answered in the closing words of Koheleth's declaration concerning man's final state. Then “the dust [of man, not of the beast] returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit [of man, not of the beast] returneth unto God who gave it” (Eccl. 12: 7).

It is said that when “Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” that “man became a living soul” (Gen. 2: 7). Here it is soul, not spirit, that is spoken of as given to man by God. But it was then that man's body first received its animal life, or its soul, and it was

then also that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26, 27), with a spirit given him from God capable of knowing God, and of aspiring to be like God. This distinction between man's soul or his animal life, and man's spirit or his nature after God's likeness, is borne out all through the Scriptures.

While the "spirit" is often employed as designating man's personality or self, it is not spoken of as distinct from the "spirit" which survives the body. Even God himself uses the term soul as applicable to his entire nature or self, as when he says of his Messiah, "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth" (Isa. 42: 1; Matt. 12: 18).

Because the term "soul" is never given in the Bible as designating the higher nature of man, that portion of his nature which survives the perishing body with its animal life, we are liable to be confused ourselves, and to mislead and confuse our fellows, when we so employ the term "soul" in our ordinary speech. The correct way is the best way, and the incorrect way is a poor way, whether we are intentionally in error or are simply careless in the employing of the wrong term.

XXX

WHAT WILL SATISFY US WHEN  
WE AWAKE?

As a well-known text is ordinarily understood, we are encouraged to believe that we shall finally awake in the likeness of God, and that, being in that likeness, we shall be satisfied. The text is in the Psalms, and it reads, in both the King James version and the Anglo-American Revision, "I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness." But the ordinary understanding of this text is wholly wrong. The text as it stands in the original would be convincing as to this; and so, indeed, would be the text with its indicated meaning in the context in our English version. The American Standard Revision makes the meaning clear by this translation: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form."

The text reads, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." As it is ordinarily understood, it would read, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." Indeed, a volume of published sermons by a distinguished clergyman gave this text in the erroneous and popular



form, instead of the correct one. The words might more properly or more intelligently be rendered, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness, when I awake." As ordinarily misread, it might be, "When I awake in thy likeness I shall be satisfied"—with my looks.

The common understanding of this text is that it refers to the final awakening after the sleep of death. In this way it is spoken of in the hymns which we hear :

"I shall be satisfied,  
I shall be satisfied,  
When I awake in thy likeness."

Dr. J. Addison Alexander has suggested that this psalm was written as an evening psalm, with the outlook toward a better and a brighter coming day. The context would seem to justify this :

"Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword;  
From men, by thy hand, O Lord,  
From men of the world, whose portion is in this life,  
And whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure:  
They are satisfied with children,  
And leave the rest of their substance to their babes.  
As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:  
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Men of the world, suggests the Psalmist, may be satisfied with the things of the world, secured

to them or to their children. But these are not enough for me. Only God is sufficient to meet my longings. Only when I am fully awake to the sight of him as he is shall I, or should I, be satisfied.

It is a great mistake to suppose that God's promises for the future are to be realized only in another life. In the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there are ten promises for this life where there is one for the life to come. God's promises of good are for the life that now is, even if we are to have still better things hereafter. This may not be the ordinary way of looking at God's promises, but it is the right way—the Bible way.

Whether this be a psalm written for evening or for any other occasion, it is manifest that the psalmist wants it understood that whenever he awakes, whenever he sees things as they really are, he will be satisfied with the likeness of God, with the appearance of God, with God himself, and that nothing short of this will ever satisfy him. How much better is that thought than the ordinary one in connection with this psalm, that we shall be satisfied with our own appearance when we look like God!

## XXXI

### THE RESURRECTION NOT A MERE RISING AGAIN

A "resurrection" is literally a "rising again." In that sense we speak of nature's resurrection in the spring, and in the same sense we may speak of our resurrection every morning, as we awake from sleep and insensibility, and arise for a new day's life. But as applied to man's existence, we use the word "resurrection" as meaning a man's awakening from the sleep of death, his rising again to life, after he has been for a time in the state of death. As a Bible phrase, and as a term used in theological writings, the resurrection means the rising to life of Jesus after his crucifixion and burial; and again it refers to the event when all that are dead shall rise from the grave, and come anew to life at the end of the age.

But while the word "resurrection," as used in the Bible or outside of it, means, as a word, no more than a rising again or an awakening, the idea of a resurrection or of the resurrection implies in its signification more than a mere awakening, or a rising up, from the dead. The resur-

rection of our bodies after death is in connection with a change, so that the new body shall be in accordance with the conditions and needs of the new life as distinct from the old life. On this point the text and the narrative of the Bible are explicit and positive, and the failure to realize this is a failure to comprehend the importance and magnitude of the central fact of Christianity—the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“We all shall not sleep [the sleep of death], but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible [already incorruptible when they are raised], and we [still in our corruptible bodies] shall be changed. For this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [body] must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15: 51-54). “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits [of the resurrection harvest]; then they that are Christ’s, at his coming” (1 Cor. 15: 21-23).

“But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou thy-

self sowest is not quickened [made alive] except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance [to be] of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption [not raised to become afterward incorruptible, but raised in incorruption]; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15: 35-44).

This is the order and the manner of the resurrection, according to the assurances of the inspired writer. Jesus was the "first-fruits" of the resurrection; but he was not the first person who had been raised to life from the dead. Hence his resurrection could not have been his mere rising up in his unchanged natural body. Jesus had himself raised up Lazarus, calling him out of the grave where he had been dead four days. Jesus had called to life the dead son of the widow of Nain, as he was being carried to the grave. Long before this, Elisha had raised to life the dead son of the Shunammite woman. But no one of these risings from the dead was a "resurrec-

tion," as was that of Jesus, and as will be that of every follower of Jesus in the time of resurrection. A change from a corruptible body to an incorruptible one, a change from a natural body to a spiritual body, there must have been in Jesus when he became the "first-fruits" of the resurrection harvest. Was this so? The question is not, What have men, even creed and catechism writers, said about it? But, What is the Bible showing on the subject?

When the "natural" body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, it had been reverently prepared for burial by godly Jews. It is important to have in mind the manner of Oriental burial. This was not like our Occidental method of arraying the corpse in fitting and seemly garments, but it was by enwrapping the body from feet to head in a clean cloth, or band, somewhat after the manner of a surgeon's bandaging. The arms, laid close to the side, were included in the wrapping. A napkin was about the head and face. Indeed, there seems to be a survival of this idea in our popular term of the "winding-sheet" as a garment for the grave. The cerements of an Egyptian mummy better illustrate this than anything shown in the work of a modern undertaker. A reference is made to such burial cloths when the dead Lazarus came from his grave at Bethany

at the call of Jesus: "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes [as our English translation gives it, but it is more properly given in the margin grave-bands]; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (John 11: 44). When the body of Jesus was granted to Joseph of Arimathea, "he bought a linen cloth [a burial cloth], and, taking him [Jesus] down, wound him [rolled; the Greek word is "entulittō": to roll or wrap] in the linen [burial] cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he [Joseph] rolled a stone against the door of the tomb" (Mark 15: 46).

Thus as to the death and burial of Jesus, or as to his giving up his natural life and his being rolled in the burial cloth and entombed. The stone was sealed by Pilate's order. Now as to the resurrection of Jesus on the third day. Did he simply rise from the dead, as did Lazarus at his call? Was his revivification merely like that of Lazarus and of the son of the widow of Nain? Or was he really in his rising the first-fruits of the resurrection, in his passing through that change from the natural to the spiritual body, which all the redeemed shall pass through, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last

trump?" What are the Bible indications as to this? No human eye saw the rising of Jesus from the dead. No hand, not even an angel's hand, rolled away the entrance stone, before Jesus passed out from the tomb. When, indeed, an angel of the Lord rolled away the stone and sat upon it, it was said that Jesus had already risen. What, then, was his rising from the dead? Note the inspired record.

Matthew says that the angel said to the women at the tomb, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28: 6), as if that sight itself would be proof of his resurrection. Mark repeats this fact, that the young man angel said to the women at the empty tomb, "Behold, the place where they laid him!" (Mark 16: 6). Luke, in telling the story, says that Peter, looking into the empty tomb, saw "the linen cloths by themselves," and went away wondering (Luke 24: 12). John further adds that Peter saw "the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place [in its place] by itself." And John also, who was with Peter, "saw [this], and believed" (John 20: 6-8). It is evident from this fourfold specific record that there was something in the sight itself that was a testimony to the resurrection. This sight was



not merely a blank, an absence of a body. What was it?

Jesus' natural body had been changed to a spiritual body; his mortal body had put on immortality; that which was sown in humiliation had been raised in glory. Therefore the changed body had come out from the linen enwrappings of the body taken down from the cross, leaving those cerements as the transfigured butterfly leaves the chrysalis. Thus those linen enwrappings were of themselves irresistible evidence and proof of the resurrection of Jesus. As no human power could arrange them, there they lay, no fold disturbed, those of the body in their place, that of the face and head, the napkin by itself. What wonder that the angel called attention to this great proof of the resurrection! What wonder that Peter and others saw and believed! And, as from the Scriptures we understand, Jesus did not merely rise up from the dead, as others before had risen up from the dead, but was "the first-fruits of the resurrection" harvest, and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," he was changed, so his loved ones are to be changed in the resurrection.

Had Jesus risen up in his natural body, he could at once have been recognized by his loved ones who had known him in the years gone by.

But from Mary Magdalene, who thought he was the gardener, to the disciples with whom he walked on the way to Emmaus, those who so well knew his natural form and face seemed to have doubts as to his identity. His spiritual body was no longer subject to the conditions of his natural body. He passed out from the stone-locked tomb. He entered the room where were his disciples behind closed doors. His every move gave added proof of his changed body in his resurrection.

Of course, when Jesus would prove his identity to his disciples who doubted, he would be ready to show his nail-pierced hands and feet, or his spear-pierced side, as evidence to their human senses, but this was a purposeful departure from his now normal state. He thus adapted himself to the limitations and questionings of those still in the flesh. He thus convinced them that he was not a mere apparition, a "ghost." If one of our dear ones in the spirit life were permitted to-day to come again to us here on earth, that spirit would have to be known to us by some sign or appearance familiar to our human senses; but we should not suppose from that that therefore the loved one's normal or ordinary spiritual presence was the same as the former physical presence.

When Jesus, on the third day after his crucifixion, rose from the dead, his was not a mere awakening to, and an uprising in, his former natural body. If it were so, the resurrection of Jesus could not be to us the assurance, the life, and the hope, that it now is. But Jesus came out of his linen cloth enwrappings, and out of his sealed stone tomb, in his changed resurrection body. Of that the disciples had evidence in the very chrysalis cloths themselves, and the whole narrative is in keeping with this assurance. How many have erred in the reading of the Bible record as to this! Let us not come short of our hope and faith, as we are entitled to have them confirmed by this record.

## XXXII

### “AMEN, AND AMEN”

No other Bible term, or word, is used so frequently, or by so many persons, or so unmeaningly, as the word “Amen”—a Hebrew word. Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans are as one in using this term at the close of every prayer, as a response to any important covenant or agreement, and as a declaration or ejaculation in the announcement of many an important truth. Yet Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans fail of agreement as to the precise or definite meaning of this term. Their lexicons and their critical commentators are at variance as to its signification, and, when they attempt to give its supposed equivalent in well-known words, they admit that it does not always mean that, or anything like it.

In translating the Hebrew Scriptures into any other language, it is customary to transfer this word in its Hebrew form, instead of translating it; and then when the ordinary religious teacher attempts its explanation, he gives a mistaken rendering. When the average man uses the word “Amen” most earnestly and with greatest

emphasis, he knows least about its meaning. He seems, in fact, to be devout and hearty in his cry of “Amen” in proportion to his lack of any clear idea of its signification.

A good Christian mother overheard her little daughter explaining to a younger brother the meaning of “Amen” at the close of his evening prayer:

“‘Amen’ means ‘You mustn’t touch it.’”

And that boy was satisfied. He accepted the explanation as if it were inspired. But his mother was shocked. It seemed as if her daughter were irreverently leading her brother astray, and she called her in order to rebuke her.

“What did you mean by telling your brother that ‘Amen’ means ‘You mustn’t touch it’?”

“Why you told me so, mamma.”

“I told you so, my dear? When?”

“I asked you what ‘Amen’ meant, and you said, ‘Let it be.’ That’s what I told Willie.”

Then the mother remembered that she had given her daughter the conventional explanation of “Amen” as “So let it be,” which the daughter had interpreted colloquially as “Let it be,” or “Let it alone.” Both mother and daughter had their conventional understanding of that mysterious term, but neither daughter nor mother was correct in the case. They simply

represented, in their vagueness of view, the average user of the word "Amen."

Another little girl, on being asked what she understood by "Amen," said artlessly:

"I used to think it meant 'stop,' when we came to the end of a prayer. But when I went to the Methodist church I found they said 'Amen' when they didn't stop, and weren't agoing to. Now, I don't know what it does mean."

Her state of mind is a common one as to the meaning of the word

It is useless to go to an English dictionary to find the meaning of a Hebrew word like this. Nor does a Hebrew dictionary assume to settle the question. The more common English idea is that "Amen" is a sort of supplementary prayer, at the close of a formal or specific prayer; that it is a request for God to grant the petitions already asked, to let it be as has been desired of him. With this view of the word many use it entreatingly or doubtingly, as if saying, "I wish you would do, O Lord, as you are asked to do; but, of course, I cannot be sure that you will." Yet "Amen" is not a prayer. The idea of prayer or of request is not in it. It has more of the thought of positive affirmation, or of trustful acquiescence, or of confident response, than it has of petition, even in those places where it

might seem to mean "Let it be thus." The word has a sense of restful assurance in it, of unwavering confidence, hardly to be found in any other word in any language. Doubt or question or request has properly no place in connection with the term.

The root idea of the Hebrew word "Amen" is "to be firm," "to be steadfast," "to be strong," "to be immovable." The same idea is in the earlier Babylonian and in the later Arabic. A similar thought is in its use in the Greek. Hence, wherever the word is found, there must be the idea of stability and resultant confidence, not of question or doubt. The Assyrian term for "army," the strong support of the ruler, is from the same root. In the Arabic, "Al-Ameen," "The Faithful One," or "The Trusty One," is one of the names given to Muhammad. In the Apocalypse Jesus is spoken of as "the Amen:" "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3: 14).

In all the derivatives of this word the idea of unwavering confidence, usually of restful trust in a person, is to be found as the main thought and factor. When, at the beginning of the history of God's chosen people, the Lord called Abraham to leave his home, his people, his coun-

try, and to have no other purpose than to do and to be as the Lord would have him, and no specific plans in life, it is said (Gen. 15: 6) that Abraham "heëmeened the Lord" ("Amen-ed the Lord"), giving himself wholly and unreservedly to the Lord, and went out, not knowing whither he went, but restful in his unwavering trust in the Sure One.

Our English version of the Bible renders this story of Abraham's act, or state, "He believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." But this fails to give to the ordinary reader the idea of the original; for we, with our cold Occidental ways, are inclined to think of "belief" as in some way connected with the idea of an intellectual assent to abstract propositions or fundamental truths, while an Oriental has no conception of this in such a case. Abraham heard the call of the Lord, and at once he gave himself up in unhesitating trust to the Lord, nothing doubting. He so trusted the Lord, so trusted himself to the Lord, so gave himself up to the Lord's very self, that the Lord counted him as a part of himself. This was the essence of an "Amen," of being an amen to the Lord's call.

In Luther's Catechism the true idea of "Amen" is brought out in its definition; but the



suggestion of petition rather than of unwavering assurance is added, as if that were one of its meanings, so that the average learner is still in doubt as to its real significance. Thus: “Amen meaneth namely, assuredly, that I am sure that petitions of this kind are accepted by my heavenly Father, and heard by him; because he hath commanded us that we should pray after this manner, and hath promised that he will hear us. Amen, Amen! That is, truly, certainly, so be it.” This final explanation tends to throw the whole meaning of the word in doubt, as it is in so many minds. The Church of England Catechism gives the definition of “Amen” simply as “So be it.”

In the Westminster Catechism it is said that at “the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer,” “in testimony to our desire and assurance to be heard, we say ‘Amen.’” But it will be admitted by users of that Catechism generally that the idea of “Amen” as expressing a “desire to be heard” is far more prominent than an “assurance” that we are heard. Yet it is this latter thought that is dominant in the word itself. In the Catechism of the Methodist Episcopal Church it is said, somewhat vaguely, that “Amen signifies verily, truly, or ‘so let it be,’ and at the end of our prayer expresses a hearty wish that

what we have asked for may be granted or accomplished."

The Heidelberg Catechism gives the true definition of "Amen," without any doubtful note: "Amen signifies: It shall truly and certainly be, for my prayer is more assuredly heard of God than I feel in my heart that I desire these things of him." If all who have been brought up under this teaching use the word Amen in their prayers with this view of its meaning, they at least employ it in faith, nothing doubting.

As the word "Amen," with its derivatives, is much the same in the Arabic as in the Hebrew, an interest attaches to its use in Arabic. The first chapter, or sura, of the Qurân, called the Fatihah, is employed among "the faithful" as an agreement, or covenant, or pledge of fidelity, in entering upon any common undertaking or important movement. At the conclusion of that recitation "Amen" is always uttered devoutly, not as a prayer, but as a pledge of sincerity and faith. In the cities, as in the desert, of the East, two men, at the conclusion of a vital contract, recite together that sura, with their open palms as a book before them, and at its close they reverently repeat together the "Amen," as if that bound the whole beyond recall.

The word "Amen" does not seem to be in the

original record of that sura, yet it always accompanies its recitation. Arabic commentators seem to be not quite sure as to the meaning of this word “Amen,” but they recognize its importance, and in all their suggested meanings the idea of stability and certitude prevails.

In the Arabic, as in the Hebrew, the verb form of “Amen” carries the idea of trusting and of being trustworthy, and it is employed as indicating the unqualified committal of self to another. The writer once asked a learned Arabic scholar, who was a native of the East, what he understood by this term *amana*. He replied earnestly: “*Amana* means that a man gets out of himself and gets into another; he gives himself up wholly to another, and trusts him utterly. It means that, and a great deal more. *Amana* means so much that I can’t tell you all it means.”

Dr. Edkins, the Chinese scholar, suggests (“The Religions of China,” p. 118) that a correspondent word in the Chinese “for faithfulness means both to be trustworthy and also to trust.” It is employed of devoted friendship.

In the Greek, the word “Amen,” transferred in that form from the Hebrew, is variously translated, but in every instance the idea seems to be that of “verily,” “truly,” “certainly,” or of “fidelity” and “confidence.” The idea is never

of petition or question, but always of assurance and restful trust. Jesus frequently opens his more important teachings with the words "Amen," or "Amen, amen," in affirmation of their certainty and importance. Our English Bible renders this term "verily," or "verily, verily" (Matt. 5: 18; 8: 10; 10: 15; Mark 3: 28; 8: 12; Luke 4: 24; 12: 37; John 1: 51; 5: 19; 6: 26, etc.). There can be no thought of petition or of doubt in such an emphatic asseveration on the part of Jesus.

The promises of God are said to be, in Christ, "Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (2 Cor. 1: 20). They are all sure and true. At the giving of thanks, when praise, not petition, was in order, a believer was to respond, gratefully, "Amen" (1 Cor. 14: 16).

As in the Greek, so in the Hebrew, all the uses of "Amen," in the Old Testament, are consistent with its meaning as an expression of unwavering confidence. The idea of petition or request never has a place there. When a woman charged with marital unfaithfulness was brought before the priest, under the ancient law of Israel, the priest invoked the judgment of God on her if she was guilty. At this invocation, it is recorded: "And the woman shall say, Amen, amen" (Num. 5: 22). It is evident here that

the woman, claiming to be innocent, confidently appeals to God as faithful and true, and therefore sure to make clear her innocence. "Certainly, certainly," she says, "Truly, truly," and she leaves herself and her case with God. It is not a prayer on her part, but an expression of her confidence in the fidelity of God. In consistency with its meaning elsewhere, "Amen" might indeed here mean "Let it be so. I am glad to rest the issue with God." But that is trustful acquiescence, not petition.

It would seem, however, that this illustration of the use of "Amen" is the one passage in the Bible which has been understood as a petition, and has led to the rendering of it as "So let it be," or "So be it." From this instance alone many have come to suppose that "Amen" is a request for God's favor; until, indeed, a great majority of its users employ it only as a call for a blessing that is by no means assured.

The Talmudists, discussing the meaning of "Amen," suggest the threefold meaning of (1) an oath, (2) an acceptance of spoken words, and (3) a confirmation of words uttered. They cite in proof of these meanings the response of the accused woman (Num. 5: 22); the response of the people to the blessings and cursings at Ebal and Gerizim (Deut. 27: 11-26); and the

utterance of the prophet in confident affirmation of his commanded message (Jer. 28: 6). These meanings are all consistent with the idea of unwavering trust in the fidelity and immovableness of the Lord.

In recognition of the fact that even of old there was a lack of apprehension of the true meaning of "Amen" on the part of many who employed it, the Talmudists pointed out popular forms of this response or assurance that could not have God's approval. Thus there was the "hasty Amen," or the "Amen cut short" through inattention; and the "orphan Amen," when its user had not heard the prayer or benediction to which it referred.<sup>1</sup> The "hasty" and "orphan" Amens are not unknown in Christian congregations nowadays.

"Islam," or "submission," is the expression of the Muhammadan's recognition of the inevitable. He accepts the decrees of fate, because there is nothing else for him to do. "Amen," on the other hand, is the trustful believer's confident committal of himself, his petitions, and his cause, to his loving Father and Friend, because he is glad to do it, and because it is the best thing that could be done.

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<sup>1</sup> These facts as to the Talmud I have on the authority of the eminent Talmudist, the Rev. Dr. Marcus Jastrow.

In all the Bible uses of the word “Amen,” and in the meanings of that word as found in the Babylonian, the Hebrew, the Arabic, the Greek, and the English, it is evident that the prevailing idea is that of strength and confidence, resulting from unwavering trust in one who will not fail. Doubt, question, or anxiety, has no place in its use. It is thus in connection with a prayer, as in connection with a declaration of truth. Whether it be a blessing that is spoken, a series of petitions that is offered, or an invoking of God’s intervention and decision that is made, whatever doubt there may be at any point up to its close, the use of the final “Amen” is a confident cry without hesitation or fear. To say “Amen” is not to say “Oh that it might be so!” but rather “Certainly,” “Truly,” “Surely,” “It will be right because God is God, and his will is to be done.”

“Amen” was not a term used in the temple at Jerusalem. It seemed to be taken for granted there that God would be faithful, and be ever true to his promises. It is said that in the great synagogue in Alexandria an attendant stood on a platform in the center, and when the time came for all to respond he waved a flag, and all then answered “Amen.”

It is said by the rabbins that he who joined

sincerely in the "Amen," in the synagogue service, had a share in the whole prayer, although he took no other part.

"Amen" is never a minor portion of a prayer. It is the strongest and best part of it. It is not to be spoken in a minor key, or in a low tone and hesitatingly. That cry at least ought to be a glad and triumphant one, spoken from the heart and aloud with the lips, in confident assurance and in restful truth. "Amen and amen." Whatever is our prayer, we should be able to leave it with God in faith. In this committal, at least, "whatever is not of faith is sin."



### XXXIII

#### CAN MAN DEFINE INFINITE TRUTH?

(We should say it reverently, but we can say it positively, that, as to the disclosure to us of things infinite and spiritual, God is limited by our limitations. It is impossible that, while we are in the limitations of the natural and the finite, we should be able to comprehend in its incomprehensibility, and to conceive in its inconceivability, the measures of the immeasurable and the bounds of the boundless, in spheres and realms above and beyond all that we know or can comprehend. This is not because God is not willing to impart, but because we in our present state are unable to receive, the truth as it is concerning matters utterly beyond our sphere and scope of knowledge.)

It is so, in a sense, with a child and its parent, even while both are in the same human sphere. If a father who has had trials and experiences in life from which he would have his loved child spared, has a little babe for which he is responsible, can that father make all this clear to that babe while it is a babe? Suppose the father takes the child when six weeks old, or six

months, or even six years, and tells it what are life's severest trials and perils, pointing out every danger to be shunned and every duty to be performed; will the child know it all? If that effort be not successful, why is the failure? Is the cause in the father's unwillingness to give needed knowledge, or in the child's incapacity to receive it? This is in the human sphere, where father and child are on the same plane of existence and being. But where one is finite and the other infinite, how much vaster the difference! Who would say or think that the difference between the wisest human father and his little babe is as wide and real as is that between the wisest human being and his Infinite and Almighty Father? Yet the case being as we know it to be, what folly it is to think that man in the physical and finite sphere can, while he is in those limitations, comprehend or define what is in the sphere of the spiritual and the infinite.

Even within the range of our ordinary human senses, we can perceive that the lack of but a single sense limits and restricts, not only in power of performance, but in capacity of comprehension, one who lacks that sense, in comparison with one who possesses it. What does one born blind know about the beauty of varied colors? How useless to him is any description

of the hidden beauties of sight, when never so eloquently described by an enthusiastic artist ! The permanent limitation is in the one blind, not in the one who sees and tries to enlighten by words. So of one born deaf, in comparison with a lover of music and of sweet sounds. How can one describe the soft tones of an Æolian harp to an ever-closed ear ? And so of each one of our physical senses. How can it be less difficult for one in the realm of the spiritual and the infinite to communicate the truth as to that realm to one who has no experience or knowledge or powers of conception beyond the material and finite ?

Even when an inspired writer who has been given a message to ordinary man seeks to convey in that message some knowledge or idea of a realm and sphere beyond and above the human and finite, he is necessitated to employ terms that suggest, but do not define, the truth. Thus the Apostle Paul, who declares that he has had disclosed to him by God's power some of the wonders and beauties of the spiritual realm and sphere, is unable to define in human words any one feature of his wonderful knowledge. He says that God's way are "past tracing out" (Rom. 11: 33). Even what he has seen and heard of the spiritual life and sphere he refers

to as "unspeakable [or, unutterable in] words" (2 Cor. 12: 4). If Paul had known less he might have felt differently, or have had freer and more confident utterance about such things.

Paul, referring to these things, uses words that are at the best not explicit or exact, and that are evidently contradictory and obviously insufficient for their purpose. Thus he says that at the close of our earthly life our personality shall be, in God's great field, "sown a natural body" and "raised a spiritual body." But that is an obvious contradiction of terms, and it is clearly employed as such because of our human limitations. That which is a spirit is not a body. But Paul uses these words as suggestive, not as definitive. Thus he writes of "spiritual meat" and "spiritual drink," and of a "spiritual rock." If we take those words as suggestive of what cannot be defined in words, we do well. But if we take them as descriptive and definitive, we are childish, but not child-like, in dealing with the incomprehensible and the undefinable.

Again the Apostle John, out of spiritual visions and through revelations to him by inspiration, suggests, in the Apocalypse, the beauties of the New Jerusalem, or of the spiritual city in the realm of the infinite. He speaks of the streets of "pure gold, as it were transparent glass,"

and of the "wall of jasper," and of the twelve gates of pearl, "each one of the several gates was of one pearl" (Rev. 21). And the dimensions and measurements of this heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, are specifically given in the record.

Now this description has its value as suggestive to mankind, but not as an exact and precise defining of the things spoken of. Yet even Christian scholars and valued biblical exegetes in modern times have insisted that, because the Bible is given to instruct man in his present sphere and limitations, its words must be taken as the literal truth, and believed accordingly. There stands out in my memory a sermon on this subject by a clergyman who was widely loved and honored. He said with reference to the description of the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse that these words must be taken literally, and not supposed to be merely figurative, or only as a suggestion of the truth. He said: "If God had wanted to give us an exact description of the New Jerusalem as it is, and as it is to be, what words could he have employed that would be more specific than those chosen by him in this description of it as it is?" As he read over again the text, he warned his hearers against seeking to find some other meaning for Bible

words than their obvious and plain meaning. And that was a common way of looking at Bible teachings a generation and more ago.

I once heard an eminent divine in the Presbyterian Church,—one of a family of distinguished clergymen in this country,—express similar views of Bible truth. All would recognize his honored name if it were mentioned. He took the measurements of the Holy City as given in its four-square form in the Apocalypse (Rev. 21: 16), and showed mathematically that there was actually space there for housing all the sons of men that have ever existed in the six thousand years since Adam (that was the period of man's existence on earth as claimed in those days). He allowed three generations to a century, and he estimated the world's population at the numbers now existing, and the same from the days of Adam to the end of the six thousand years. In this estimate or calculation he had one series of tenements above another after the manner of the sky-scraper buildings of to-day; as "the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal." His calculation allowed a residence for every soul equal to the dimensions of the average city house lot of to-day. Was not that a liberal allowance for the average soul? It would certainly seem to be fully enough for some souls.

It was under the influence of such teaching as to Bible literature that I and others were brought up. But as I have elsewhere shown, Dr. Horace Bushnell threw new light on the Bible in his epoch-making essay, "Our Gospel a Gift to the Imagination." I was thus led out of thick darkness toward the light. But even good Dr. Bushnell did not follow to its legitimate and necessary conclusion the great truth concerning Bible teachings and phraseology that he enunciated. I even ventured to say to him that this was so when the good Doctor first read to his ministerial brethren his new volume on "Forgiveness and Law," giving his later ideas of the profoundest theology, as preferable to that then prevalent.

Walking away from that gathering with Dr. Bushnell, I said to him in daring frankness, "Doctor, you know how I look up to your greatness, and what hard work you had to teach me some of your great lessons. But the one that was most to me was that our gospel is a gift to the imagination, because God has to use terms that suggest rather than define theological truths. Yet now, having taught me that, you attempt to show the outlines of a new theology. When I get to heaven I may find that your new view is a correct one. But I can't take it in this being." At this the Doctor laughed good-



naturedly. I have never stopped thinking in the line in which he first started me. And the present chapter is one of the results.

Many persons, even eminent theologians and profound thinkers, to this day seem to lose sight of the truth that there is no time or measure of time in eternity, and that to speak of past or future with God is to lose sight of the truth that in eternity there is only the ever-present. Thus it always has been; thus it always must be. God who was, and is, and is to be, is co-existent with eternity. To speak of the past or the future with God is to employ human phrases with reference to the infinite and eternal; as when we speak of a "spiritual body," or "spiritual meat," or "spiritual drink," or of the self-contradictory term "spirit-matter."

"But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." That is no rash saying, but is the statement of an inspired writer; and even that is not to be taken literally, but obviously as a mere suggestion. In former days it was the custom to take that passage literally, and to explain it by saying that six days of labor were to be followed by a day of rest. Thus it was in the creation, and thus it must be in the final culmination; that was a common way



of looking at it. As with God a thousand years are as one day, so six thousand years of the earth's continuance are as six days; and those six thousand years or days are to be followed by a day or period of rest, in the millennium of sabbath repose. How many times I have heard it said that the millennium is to begin at the period of six thousand years from creation! But that Bible statement, as we now perceive, does not mean that. It indicates, on the contrary, that the measures of time do not apply to eternity. Eternity has no periods or stages like time, such as days or years or ages. It has neither past nor future; it is always the ever-present.

We have to employ human phrases and figures of time in order to suggest the infinite and eternal. In this sense we can say that with God, who was, and is, and is to be, the eternal I AM, the creation and the fall of Adam, and the birth and the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus, and Christ's second coming, and the day of the final judgment, and the end of the world and of the age, are all in God's sight as in the same instant. How meaningless in view of this truth are any words that seem to involve the thought of future! There can be no such thing as planning or deciding as to the future with One who is always the Ever-Present. Such a phrase can

seem to have an explicit meaning, and thus can be a means of confusion and worry to one who is finite and human; and in the sense that it is used, or misused, by ordinary, or even by extraordinary, minds, it is utterly unreal and untrue.

We know that in our ordinary sleep we may live years in a few minutes of dream or thought, and that in our waking thoughts we may go to the ends of the earth and to the bounds of the remotest fixed star in a second's time; for thought is not limited like matter. In view of this truth, what folly it is for one who is in time and in the flesh to attempt to limit and define in human words the spiritual and the infinite and the eternal! As God's children on earth come in the progress of ages to know more they will assume to know less. They will see that the spiritual and the eternal and the infinite cannot be stated or defined in human words. What folly must our present wisdom seem in God's sight!

Bible statements concerning God's planning, or acting, or changing his plans or actions, as to particular men's conduct or destiny, are suggestions to men as to their duty and dependence. But to use such statements as if they literally applied to or included God, who is the Ever Eternal, not subject to the conditions of time, is utterly and always incorrect and improper.

How the best of men have been misled by such sad misreadings and perversions of Bible teachings!

We recognize the folly and falsity of Mormon excesses in the application of anthropological views as applied to God in his relations to humanity. Thus they claim that God is spoken of in the Bible as having a "face" and a "back" and "arms" and "fingers" and "feet;" therefore he must have a form like man's. We admit the absurdity of this; but we have not sufficiently recognized the error of every religious writer who speaks of or deals with God's planning or acting as if there were, or had been, any possibility of human measures, as of time, in eternity. The moment we depart from the truth that eternity is ever and always and only the present, and not the past or the future, we depart from the proper way of thinking of God, whose being is suggested but not defined to man in human language, whether used in the Bible or elsewhere. The other is the Mormon method.

Man having before him the thought of systems of human doctrine and the requirements and limitations of human ideas, is careful to declare and affirm explicitly and definitely that God is not the author of sin; that God ordains only good, but permits evil. But God, being bound or ham-

pered by no such human limitations, does not hesitate to declare and affirm explicitly: "I am Jehovah, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things" (Isa. 45: 6, 7). And again it is said by the inspired writer that "an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul" (1 Sam. 18: 10), and similarly again and again. These obviously are not definitive statements; for God's nature or methods cannot be stated in human words; but they are suggestions of the truth that God is over all that we know or know of.

"His greatness is unsearchable" (Psa. 145: 3). So of every Bible statement as to God's foreknowing or predestinating: they are suggestions of a truth that can cheer and inspire man; they are not a declaration or a definition of God's power or plans in the inconceivable eternity.

Human writers are careful to insist that God never causes man to sin. But God in his Word, as if not careful to consider the bounds of human beliefs, records as to a particular individual such distinct and seemingly inconsistent statements of fact as these: "I [the Lord] will harden Pharaoh's heart" (Exod. 7: 3). "And Jehovah hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (Exod. 9: 12).

And again, "Pharaoh hardened his [own] heart" (Exod. 8: 32). And yet again, without saying who was the cause of the evil doing, "Pharaoh's heart was hardened" (Exod. 7: 22).

These and other seeming contradictions in God's Word, and these hopeless inconsistencies in man's methods of thought and statement, are but added illustrations of the different aims and purposes of the two documents. God's Word suggests to man truths about God that cannot be expressed or defined in human language. Man's systems of theology are at the best attempts to show that man understands and can explicitly and accurately explain God's plan and purposes with reference to creation and to created beings. They are vain human efforts to comprehend the incomprehensible, to explain the inexplicable, to fix limits to the illimitable, and to define in human words the undefinable characteristics of the spiritual, the infinite, the ineffable, and the eternal. Of course, the attempt is a hopeless one. God, on the other hand, suggests to man in human words in the Bible what will inform and guide him in his duties and dangers, his privileges and possibilities, and the enabling power and assistance he can have from God in God's service and in aiding those whom God loves and whom God

privileges man to aid. But God does not attempt to define to man in the Bible pages explicit characteristics and specific methods of God. For these cannot be made clear to man, even by God, while man is finite and God is ever infinite, and while man is in time, which changes and passes away, and God is in eternity, which is ever the same, and which is incomprehensible to finite man while he is in time.

God is more and vaster and better than any definition or description of him as given to man in any human system of doctrine. With the passing ages we grow beyond some conceptions of God and of his ways which our fathers held to and prized, but we have not given up enough of these errors so long as we cling to the thought that there is or has been Time, or its measures or uses, in Eternity, or with God.

After the above was written, and was read by the Rev. Professor Dr. E. T. Bartlett, of the Episcopal Divinity School, of Philadelphia, he called the writer's attention to St. Augustine on this very subject. In his *De Doctrina Christiana* (Bk. I, ch. VI), written A. D. 397, St. Augustine, after speaking of the Trinity in metaphysical terms and definitions, as compared to the Athanasian creed, says:

“Have we said anything or given utterance to

anything worthy of God? On the contrary, I feel only that I have wished to speak. But if I have spoken, it is not that which I wished to say. Whence do I know this, except because God is ineffable? But that which has been said by me, if it were ineffable, could not have been said. And also for this reason God may not be said even to be ineffable, viz., because when even that is said, something is said. And then an indescribable conflict of words follows, because if that is ineffable which cannot be said, then it is not ineffable because it can be at least said to be ineffable. This conflict of words is avoided by silence rather than reconciled by speech. And yet when nothing worthy of God can be said, nevertheless he allows the human voice to render its service, and wishes us to rejoice in his praise with our words. For thence it is that he is even called God (Deus). For it is not really in the sound of those two syllables that he himself becomes known; but nevertheless all who know the Latin language are moved by the sound of those syllables to think of a nature that is most excellent and immortal."

Again St. Augustine says :

"God is known better by not knowing."

"Of him the soul has no knowledge, except knowing that it does not know him."

“And what shall we do? Shall we be silent? Would that that were permitted! For peradventure by being silent some thought might be framed worthy of a subject ineffable.”

St. Augustine might indeed seem almost as careless, even if not unsound, in precise theological statements, as the Bible.



# SCRIPTURE INDEX

GENESIS		NUMBERS		JOB	
TEXT	PAGE	TEXT	PAGE	TEXT	PAGE
1 : 26	247	5 : 22	288, 289	1 : 14	249
1 : 26, 27	267	7 : 1	III	2 : 4	26, 262
2 : 3	III	11 : 18	III	32 : 8	264
2 : 7	266	20 : 13	III	PSALMS	
3 : 15	53	31 : 28	263	4 : 5	153
12 : 1-4	53	31 : 50	262	17 : 13-15	269
15 : 1-6	53	DEUTERONOMY		17 : 15	268
15 : 6	283	5 : 12	III	18 : 10	256
17 : 14	263	6 : 4-9	50	27 : 6	153
18 : 17-19	53	6 : 5	31	27 : 10	54
29-31	241	7 : 7, 8, 13	53	31 : 5	264
29 : 20	215	25 : 15	126	31 : 19	54
31 : 44-53	242	27 : 11-26	289	34 : 22	263
31 : 49	21, 242	32 : 51	III	35 : 9	263
49 : 10	240	JOSHUA		51 : 5	178, 179
EXODUS		3 : 5	III	51 : 17	153
7 : 3	304	7 : 13	III	63 : 1, 3	54
8 : 32	305	1 SAMUEL		94 : 12	237
9 : 12	304	16 : 5	III	103 : 8, 10, 12, 13	54
12 : 49	51	17 : 45	66	107 : 15	54
13 : 2	110	18 : 10	304	118 : 1	54
19 : 10, 11	110	19 : 20	249	119 : 126-128	63
19 : 14	110	2 SAMUEL		145 : 3	304
19 : 23	III	12 : 7	233	PROVERBS	
20 : 6	63	22 : 11	256	6 : 6	34
23 : 4, 5	51	1 KINGS		13 : 24	14, 239
28 : 41	110	12 : 14	236, 237, 238	16 : 2	265
29 : 27	III	1 CHRONICLES		18 : 10	66
29 : 43, 44	III	12 : 38	126	23 : 20	13
30 : 12	262	15 : 12, 14	III	23 : 31	34
40 : 11	III	2 CHRONICLES		25 : 21, 22	51
LEVITICUS		20 : 7	53	26 : 4	12
8 : 30	110	29 : 5	III	26 : 5	12
17 : 14	262	NEHEMIAH		ECCLESIASTES	
19 : 17, 18	51	3 : 1	III	3 : 21	266
19 : 18	31	13 : 22	III	12 : 7	266
19 : 34	51	ISAIAH		ISAIAH	
20 : 7	110	1 : 11-17	153	1 : 11-17	153
26 : 28	239	26 : 9	264	26 : 9	264
27 : 14-22	112	28 : 9	180	28 : 9	180



TEXT	PAGE
11 : 24 . . . . .	74
13 : 9 . . . . .	74
13 : 52 . . . . .	73
19 : 2, 6 . . . . .	75
28 : 27 . . . . .	82

ROMANS

2 : 5-11 . . . . .	60
3 : 31 . . . . .	60
5 : 20 . . . . .	98, 177
8 : 26, 27 . . . . .	76
11 : 33 . . . . .	295
13 : 8, 10 . . . . .	63

1 CORINTHIANS

1 : 21 . . . . .	231
2 : 11 . . . . .	265
3 : 16, 17 . . . . .	115
4 : 10 . . . . .	69
5 : 5 . . . . .	265
6 : 3 . . . . .	248
6 : 17 . . . . .	265
7 : 14 . . . . .	113
7 : 34 . . . . .	265
8 : 13 . . . . .	21
13 : 2, 3 . . . . .	102
14 : 16 . . . . .	288
14 : 33 . . . . .	48
15 : 21-23 . . . . .	272
15 : 22 . . . . .	169
15 : 35-44 . . . . .	273
15 : 51-54 . . . . .	272
15 : 52 . . . . .	276

2 CORINTHIANS

1 : 20 . . . . .	288
5 : 10, 11 . . . . .	60
7 : 1 . . . . .	265
9 : 7 . . . . .	146
12 : 4 . . . . .	296

GALATIANS

TEXT	PAGE
4 : 6 . . . . .	76
5 : 22, 23 . . . . .	76
5 : 25 . . . . .	76
6 : 2, 5 . . . . .	13
6 : 7 . . . . .	97

EPHESIANS

4 : 15 . . . . .	117
5 : 25-27 . . . . .	116

PHILIPPIANS

2 : 5 . . . . .	106
2 : 12 . . . . .	103
2 : 12, 13 . . . . .	106
4 : 11-13 . . . . .	136

COLOSSIANS

2 : 21, 22 . . . . .	21
3 : 22 . . . . .	34

1 THESSALONIANS

5 : 23 . . . . .	115, 264
5 : 6-8 . . . . .	10

2 THESSALONIANS

1 : 7-10 . . . . .	61
--------------------	----

1 TIMOTHY

4 : 4, 5 . . . . .	113
--------------------	-----

2 TIMOTHY

2 : 15 . . . . .	18
3 : 16, 17 . . . . .	20

HEBREWS

1 : 14 . . . . .	248
2 : 11 . . . . .	113
2 : 13 . . . . .	183, 185
4 : 12 . . . . .	17

TEXT	PAGE
5 : 11, 12 . . . . .	18
11 : 27 . . . . .	122
12 : 5, 6 . . . . .	236
12 : 7 . . . . .	236
12 : 8 . . . . .	236
12 : 14 . . . . .	114
12 : 19 . . . . .	238

JAMES

1 : 8 . . . . .	123, 225
2 : 20, 24, 26 . . . . .	61
3 : 2 . . . . .	127

1 PETER

1 : 12 . . . . .	248
------------------	-----

2 PETER

2 : 9 . . . . .	61
2 : 10 . . . . .	265
3 : 8 . . . . .	300
3 : 15, 16 . . . . .	18
3 : 18 . . . . .	117

1 JOHN

2 : 3, 4 . . . . .	61
3 : 7, 8 . . . . .	61
4 : 10, 11 . . . . .	64
4 : 16 . . . . .	62
5 : 3 . . . . .	62

2 JOHN

6 . . . . .	62
-------------	----

REVELATION

3 : 14 . . . . .	283
14 : 9, 10 . . . . .	62
19 : 20 . . . . .	62
21 . . . . .	297
21 : 8 . . . . .	62
21 : 16 . . . . .	298



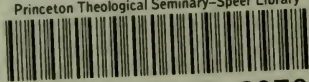






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